PC PowerPlay

THE AUSTRALIAN PC ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

Plus GAMES CD ROM

2 CDD
DOG SWAMP
NEWS & POST OFFICE
$8.95

PERFECT RACING
TOCA TOURING CARS

**FIFA 98
HEAVY GEAR
JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER
ZORK: GRAND INQUISITOR**

NEXT-GEN 3D POWERTESTED
"Twice as fast as 3Dfx"

DARK REIGN
Strategy Guide

16 DEMOS ON THE CD:
Including
MYTH
Joint Strike Fighter
CART Precision Racing
Virtual Pool 2
Wing Commander 5

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Editorial

Let's call it the Hot Genre. Besides rolling off the tongue rather nicely, it's a phrase I've decided to coin because it suits what's happening to game development and what drives it.

The original Hot Genre is the Doom clone. For a while there it was the C&C clone and now, refreshingly, it's the racing sim.

What happens is that we gamers have stuff-all of a particular type of game for a couple of years, with a sudden flooding of the market of a ton of similar/completely ripped-off games breaking the pattern.

It happens one of two ways. Firstly, the Marketing Analysts, who all think the same way, spot a hole in the market and convince the boss to invest some development dollars. This is how we've ended up with a nice round dozen GOOD driving games and a couple of exceptional ones (TOCA! TOCA!). All this after most of us hard-core driving fans had clocked up a million miles in GP2 and one or two laps in NFS. Doom and C&C clones are a no-brainer. When a completely unique game outsells everything else by an unprecedented margin, it's time for excuses from the Marketing Types and action from the designers.

Next up is the combat flight sim, a genre largely abandoned because of the perception that they are only bought in small numbers by fanatical jet fighter pilot wannabe's, and that they take forever to develop. My feeling is that this attitude is somewhat rooted, for while these fanatics are fewer in number that your average genre specialist, they'll buy everything that comes out and will support the mission addons for years to come.

A minor contender for Hot Genre is also the Combat Space Sim. These pop up at irregular intervals, but over the next couple of months we'll have I-War, Wing Commander 5, X, The 10th Planet and possible one or two more, depending on whether the developers hold back when the good stuff is released, to tweak the game to be competitive, or damn the proton torpedoes and just release them.

There's a definite pattern and it's all kind of obvious. And tedious. In the late 80's and early 90's there was no such trend. It was the golden age of forging new frontiers. It was when the genre's themselves were invented. It was fresh and exciting. We can't complain about the current situation too much though, for it means quality and fun in good big doses. It's just that there aren't any big surprises anymore. If a programmer manages to slip something truly original past the Marketing Formula it's usually diluted, weird and just doesn't work. Still, they must try, but more and more there's pressure to replicate, not innovate.

Happy New Year all! Here's to another sparkling year of 5 or 6 new games, and 500 - 600 variations of the same theme...

Ben

contents

CD GUIDE

16 DEMOS

WELCOME TO THIS MONTH'S COVER CD - HAVE A HAPPY NEW YEAR AND MAY 98 BRING US MANY MORE GAMES OF THE CALIBRE OF 97. IT'S LOOKING TO BE A BIG YEAR. WE'VE GOT A SPECIAL TREAT THIS MONTH TOO, WIREPLAY, THE BRAND NEW MULTI PLAYER GAMING SYSTEM JUST STARTED BY TELSTRA (UTILISING THE GROUND BREAKING TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPED BY BRITISH TELECOM) HAS STARTED AND THEY'VE KINDLY ALLOWED YOU TO TRIAL THE SERVICE. IT'S FAST AND WHAT US AUSSIE GAMERS HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR.

Making it work: Plan B and C

REMEMBER, EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN TAKEN TO ENSURE THE COVER CD WILL WORK ON AS WIDE A VARIETY OF MACHINES AS POSSIBLE, BUT IF YOU TRY A GAME, AND IT RUNS OFF THE CD TOO SLOWLY, OR SOUND DOESN'T WORK ETC. TRY USING THE INSTALL FUNCTION TO COPY IT TO YOUR HARD DRIVE OR IN THE EVENT OF THERE NOT BEING AN INSTALL FUNCTION, COPY THE DIRECTORY AS PER THE FOLLOWING.

IF THE UNTHINKABLE HAPPENS AND THE INSTALL PROCEDURE FAILS, NOTE THE TITLE OF EACH GAME IN THIS GUIDE. THE 3RD LINE LISTS THE DIRECTORY THE GAME IS LOCATED ON THE CD. JUST COPY THE DIRECTORY OFF OF YOUR HARD DRIVE TO THE CD, AND RUN THE EXECUTABLE MANUALLY.

CD Tech

Win 95
Running the Powerplay CD under Win 95 is best. All the games will appear on the menu and run, whether Win 95 or DOS.

CLICK ON THE POWERWIN ICON

DOS
Around half the games are DOS. The Powerplay DOS menu will only show DOS games

TYPE PCPOWER AT THE CD PROMPT (PROBABLY D:)

Win 3.1x
Some games will run under Win3.1x. The Powerplay menu won't work under Win3.1x, so run them straight from the CD with File Manager

RUN STRAIGHT FROM CD

Myth Demo

Bungie
Windows 95 RTS
\mythdemov1
Myth is the latest to enter into the Real Time Strategy arena. No groans here though, as Myth actually adds something to this rather bloated genre. Namely, Incredibly detailed 3D accelerated graphics, beautiful 3D landscapes and gameplay to boot.
System requirements: Pentium 133, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard, 3Dfx. This game is controlled with a mouse.

Daytona Deluxe Demo

Sega
Windows 95 Racing
\games\win95\ddxdemo
You're racing a Daytona Stock car that's thundering down a straight away at 250 MPH. You've got race cars all around you. One of them bumps you, and your car reacts with precision control as you guide her out of trouble. The first turn comes soaring into your view so you squeeze the steering wheel and lightly touch your brake. Take the turn too low and your car flips, take it too high you'll eat the wall. For fans of the arcade game.
System requirements: Pentium 133, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard, 3Dfx. This game supports a Joystick / Gamepad.

Dilberts Desktop Toys Demo

DreamWorks Interactive
Windows 95 Comic relief for cubicle dwellers.
\games\win95\dilbert

Those of you in the IT industry will recognise Dilbert as the embodiment of truth in the modern working environment for a computing professional. For those who don't know Dilbert, you'll quickly discover the work ethic honesty that it portrays from the descriptions of the desktop games alone.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game is controlled with a mouse.

Joint Strike Fighter Demo
Eidos Interactive
Windows 95 Flight Simulation
\games\win95\jfsdemo
This demo allows you to fly and explore the JSF world for FOUR minutes. You start on a runway near a port city in Colombia. Colombian drug lords have sent converted military ground and air units to take the base. You need to defend the base and secure the area. Good Luck! Not to sound like a broken record, but unbelievable on the 3Dfx with rain effects and particle based clouds.
System requirements: Pentium 133, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a Joystick / Gamepad. This game supports

the 3Dfx / Direct 3D

To take off quickly:
Press **F** to lower the Flaps
Press **CTRL + o** for full thrust
When you are 3/4 of the way down the runway - pull back of joystick or press down arrow

Once on the air, press **G** and **F** to raise gear and normalise the flaps
Remember to access AIR TO GROUND WEAPONS - **PRESS BACKSPACE**
Remember to access AIR TO AIR WEAPONS - **PRESS ENTER**

(ESC keys brings up the in-game menu for options and to exit)

External Camera Views
The camera views toggle with repeated presses to change views. (Multiple responses means "Press key again for")

Joint Strike Fighter

Joint Strike Fighter

F1 = Forward
F2 = Player virtual cockpit
F3 = Player external Player air flyby Player ground flyby
F4 = Player chase Player back view Player below left wing Player, below right wing
F5 = Wingman external Wingman —> Player Player —> Wingman Wingman air flyby
F6 = Plane external Plane —> Player Player —> Plane Plane air flyby
F7 = Vehicle external Vehicle —> Player Player —> Vehicle Vehicle ground flyby
F8 = Object external Object—> Player Player—> Object
F9 = Incoming missile external Incoming missile —> Player Player —> Incoming missile Incoming missile air flyby
F10 = Outgoing missile external Outgoing missile internal view Outgoing missile air flyby
F11 = Player satellite view Tower —> Player Wind Indicator
F12 = Player target external Player target—> Player Player—> Player target Player target air flyby

The view camera can be manipulated with these commands:
Ins = Next object in category
Del = Previous object in category
CtrlRight = Rotate camera right
CtrlLeft = Rotate camera left
CtrlUp = Rotate camera up
CtrlDown = Rotate camera down
PageUp = Move camera closer to
PageDn = Move camera farther from
NumPad7 = Virtual cockpit look left
NumPad8 = Virtual cockpit look back
NumPad9 = Virtual cockpit look right
NumPad1 = Control MFD
NumPad2 = Status MFD
NumPad3 = Info MFD
NumPad4 = Attack MFD
NumPad5 = Strategic MFD
NumPad6 = Offensive MFD

Basic flight controls
LeftRight = Roll plane
UpDown = Pitch up/down
,. = Rudder pedals
H = Hatch (weapons) - MUST BE OPEN TO DROP BOMBS!
G = Gear (When on ground, NOSE WHEEL LOCK)
F = Toggle flap
B = Airbrake/wheel brake
Ctrl ~ = Engine off
~ = Engine idle 60%
1 - 0 = set thrust
Ctrl 0 = Afterburner thrust
Ctrl - = Increase thrust slowly
= = Increase thrust
Both Ctrl E = Eject (this is REALLY COOL!)

Both Ctrl W = Jettison first external weapons, then internal
Both Ctrl J = Jettison fuel start/stop
Both Ctrl Arrow = Adjust trim
Space = Fire active weapon
Alt Space = Fire gun
Enter = Toggle ATA weapon
Ctrl Enter = Toggle ATA weapon down
BackSpace = Toggle ATG weapon
Ctrl BackSpace = Toggle ATG weapon down
D = Toggle ATG discriminator
Tab = Increase target
Ctrl Tab = Decrease target
E = Toggle ECM
C = Chaff
Z = Flare
ALT = Enable mouse pointer
X = Increase radar range
Ctrl X = Decrease radar range
R = Radar on/off
Shift R = Toggle radar mode

Forsaken Non Interactive Demo
Acclaim
Windows 95 Action.
\games\win95\forsaken
This Forsaken non-interactive demo will allow those with a D3D accelerator to observe the latest and most amazing Descent Clone from Acclaim. This you have to see for yourself as the quality is just fantastic. Non Interactive by the way, means you can't play it.
Hitting Escape during the demo will allow you to modify some of the playback options, including from within which ship you're view the action.
System requirements: Pentium 133, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard, 3Dfx.

Hercules Demo
Disney
Windows 95 Arcade.
\games\win95\hercdemo
This latest offering from Disney is really rather playable. Running great under windows 95, it has all the feel of a well made console game. This fast-paced adventure with attitude is an action-packed quest to become a hero as you battle evil monsters,

save Mount Olympus, and take your place among the gods. Note the particularly cool Cyclops that keeps on yelling "Hercules".
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.
Left Arrow, Right Arrow = Move right or left
Up Arrow, Down Arrow = Speed up or slow down
X = Jump
S = Pause/Unpause

CART Precision Racing Demo
Microsoft
Windows 95 Sports Simulation
\games\win95\mscart
Utilising a revamped version of the Monster Truck Madness engine, Microsoft CART allows you to compete against cart drivers. Although I'm not entirely sure what a cart is, it looks a lot like a formula one car. Cart is being heralded world wide as very accurate and other features include exacting artificial intelligence, rolling starts, daring and fully animated pit stops.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a Joystick / Gamepad. This game supports the 3Dfx / Direct 3D

Madden NFL 98 Demo
EA Sports
Windows 95 Sports Simulation
\games\win95\madden
American football might seem a bit out of place in an Australian games magazine, but in all seriousness the real game makes for an extremely playable computer game. It may seem overwhelming to get into at first, but well worth the effort. Of particular note, check out the V-Poly technology

CART Precision Racing

Hercules

Hercules

Test Drive 4

Accolade
Windows 95 Racing
\games\win95\td4norm
Before Need for Speed there was
Test Drive. More then a game, it
used to aim to give you the expe-
rience of driving a modern exot-
ic sports car. With competition
from Need For Speed 1/2 TD4
has turned into an arcade racing
game with famous and very
expensive motor vehicles.
Thankfully though, some things
never change as there's still
those innocent motorists to
avoid and the pesky police. This
demos features both the 1998
Dodge Viper and the Shelby
Cobra with the location as
Keswick, England.
*Note: Because we ran out of room on
the CD only the non 3D accelerated
version of TD4 made it. Fret not
however, for this version still looks
great and the 3D accelerated version
will be on next months cover CD.*
System requirements: Pentium
90, 8Mb RAM, Soundcard. This
game supports a
Joystick/Gamepad.
Right Arrow = Turn Right
Left Arrow = Turn Left
Up Arrow = Accelerate
Down Arrow = Brake/Reverse
Space Bar = Brake/Reverse
A = Shift Gears Up
Z = Shift Gears Down
X = Horn
Esc = Pause
F1 = Change The Size Of The
Gameplay Window (Normal Only)
F2 = Change View/Draw
Distance
F4 = Change Camera Viewpoint

of the players, it's very good.
System requirements: Pentium
133, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.
This game supports a Joystick /
Gamepad.

Politika Non-Interactive trailer
Red Storm Entertainment
Windows 95 strategy
\games\win95\politika
Although this demo is non-
interactive, the story line writ-
ten by renown author Tom
Clancy sets the mood. You're in
Russia, and President Boris
Yeltsin has suddenly died with
no obvious successor, leaving a
power vacuum. You're in
charge of one of eight major
factions that have risen from
the chaos and are competing to
take control of the remnants of
one of the most powerful
nations in the world. The final
version will also allow for mul-
tiplay over the Internet.
System requirements: Pentium
75, 8Mb RAM, Soundcard.

Madden 98

Wing Commander
Prophecy

VR Baseball
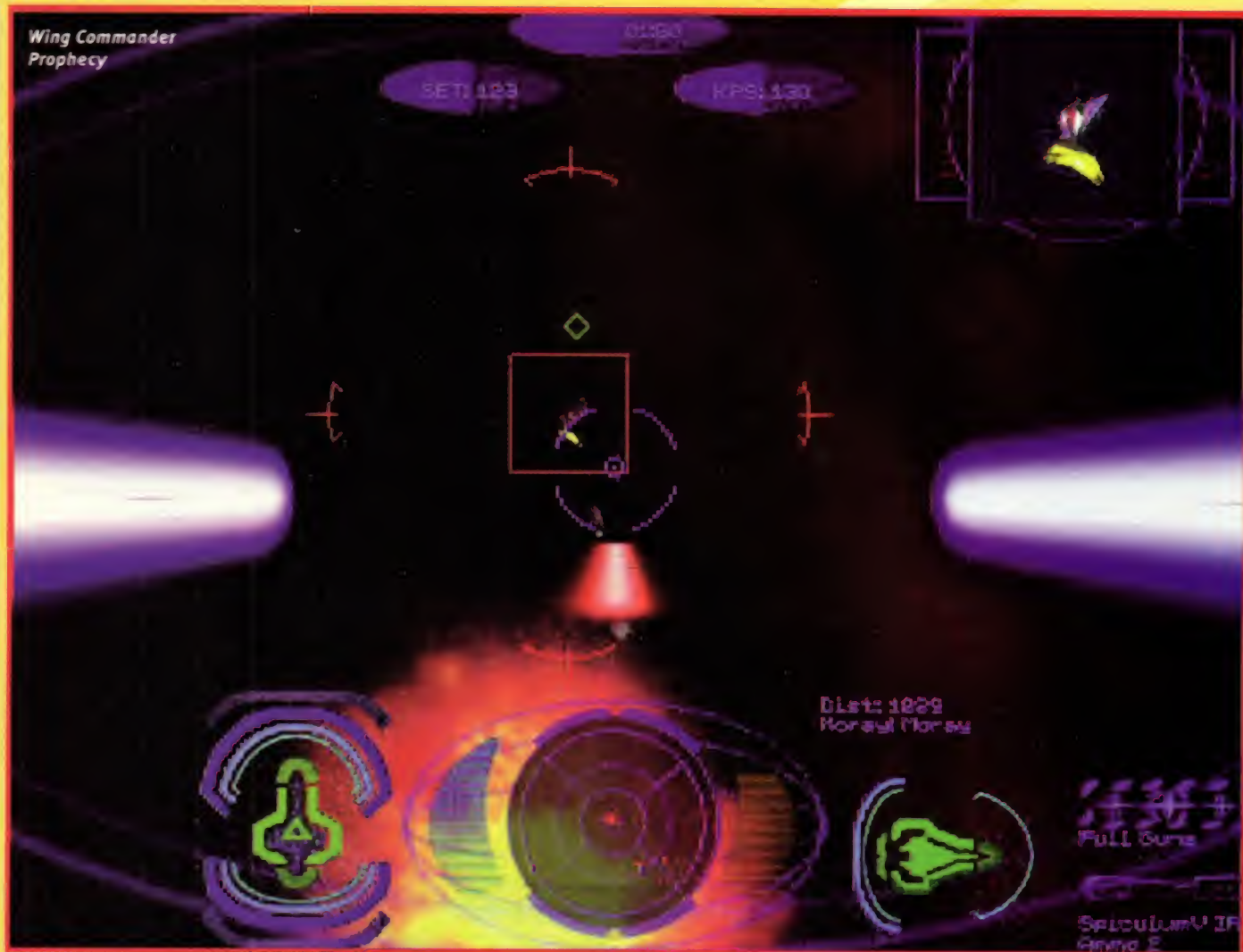
Virtual Pool 2 Demo

VR Sports

Windows 95 Sports Simulation
\games\win95\vp2

The Original Virtual Pool was a brilliant game with physics so accurate, it was scary. No doubt then that it was the number 1 pool game in the world. Virtual Pool 2 extends on the brilliance of 1 with 3D photorealistic animation, textured objects and over 50 new features.

System requirements: Pentium 90, 8Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game is controlled with a mouse.

Hint: To hit the ball, hold down the S key whilst stroking the mouse back then forward in a pool cue type fashion.

A = Aim
B = Raise Butt of Cue
C = Move Center Point
E = English = Move Cue Tip
F = Vary Tracking Force
H = Select Another Ball To Move

L = Toggle Table Lines
M = Move Ball
O = Overhead View
R = Replay Last Shot
S = Shoot
T = Toggle Tracking
U = Undo
V = Change View
X = Examine Table
Y = Your User View
Z = Zip To Result
> = Toggle Amplify
< = Toggle Fine Tune
+/= = Increase Replay Rate
- = Decrease Replay Rate
/ = Type Chat Message
L Mouse = Zoom
Ctrl-A = Set Adversary View
Ctrl-B = Spot Lowest Ball
Ctrl-C = Call Shot
Ctrl-D = Draw Game
Ctrl-G = Return To Game
Ctrl-K = Kibitz Shot
Ctrl-L = Load Saved Game/Position
Ctrl-M = Miscall Last Shot
Ctrl-P = Push Out
Ctrl-Q = Quit Current Match
Ctrl-S = Save Game Or Position
Ctrl-T = Change Player Turn
Ctrl-V = Return To Video
Ctrl-W = Set User View
Ctrl-[= Called Safety
INS = Spot/Pocket Ball Menu
ESC/ALT = Enter Menu System

VR Baseball

VR Sports
Windows 95 Sports Simulation
\games\win95\vrbdemo
The simplicity of baseball makes it an ideal computer game and the ol' baseball game has been quite prevalent in the past. Not like this though, utilising full 3D polygonal objects this is the best baseball game ever. So good, you need a 3D accelerator just to run it.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 8Mb RAM, Soundcard, 3Dfx. This game is controlled with a mouse. This game supports the 3Dfx / Direct 3D.

Wing Commander Prohecy 3Dfx test

Origin
Windows 95 Sci fi Combat
\games\win95\wcp
It's a time for honesty. Wing Commander 4 was a dud. A dull, dull, dull movie with sprinklings of action. We knew it stunk, and thankfully so did Origin. With Chris (I've got a Ferrari in every house) Roberts out of the way and onto movie making, a true legend of the gaming industry, Rod

Nakamoto, has taken over the Wing Commander 5 project. If you haven't got a 3D accelerator, find a friend with one, you have to see just how incredible WC5 has become.

System requirements: Pentium 166, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard, 3Dfx. This game is controlled with a mouse. This game supports the 3Dfx / Direct 3D.

A = Autopilot to the battle area
+ = Increase throttle
- = Decrease throttle
**** = Full speed
F = Select "Full Guns"
G = Cycle through available guns
E = Release Decoys
T = Change targets
L = Lock current target
U = Targer and lock the closest enemy
Y = Match speed with current target
Q = Roll counterclockwise
W = Roll clockwise
BACKSPACE = Full stop
ALT-E = Eject
ALT-X = Exit the test
TAB = Engage afterburner

Camera Views
F1 = Forward view (cycle)
F2 = Left view
F3 = Right view
F4 = Rear view
CTRL-F4 = Rear cam VDU
F5 = Chase camera
F6 = Object camera (cycle)
SHIFT = Rotate camera around current object
KEYPAD + = Zoom in on current object
KEYPAD - = Zoom out on current object
F7 = Ship POV camera
F8 = Missile camera (cycle) = Missile cam VDU
F9 = Victim camera
F10 = Fly-by camera
F11 = Drop camera
F12 = Target track camera

Wingmen Commands
ALT-A = Attack my target. Wingmen take the current target and begin attacking it.
ALT-B = Break and attack. Instructs wingmen to break formation andfreely attack enemies.
ALT-F = Form on my wing.
ALT-H = Help me out. Requests assistance from your wingmen. One of your wingmen will attack the target that is currently attacking you.

Puma World football 98 Demo
Ubisoft
Windows 95 Sports simulation
\games\win95\worldf
Team up with the pros in this spectacular soccer simulation specifically designed to enhance the fast paced fluid action that is synonymous with the real game.
NOTE: Just in case you forgot other countries write computer games too, this is the French version of the demo (English one wasn't ready yet. C'est la vie?).
System requirements: Pentium 166, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard, 3Dfx. This game is controlled with a mouse.

Grand Theft Auto Demo
BMG Interactive
Dos Action
\games\dos\gta
Grand Theft Auto puts you into the role of a criminal out to deliver stolen cars to gangland bosses. With the anti-hero preminent in almost every action film these days, you knew it wouldn't be too long before the "be the bad guy" games came along. Judge for yourselves. (3Dfx version next issue).
System requirements: Pentium

60, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.
This game supports a Joystick / Gamepad.
Turn Left = Cursor Left, Z
Turn Right = Cursor Right, X
Forwards = Cursor Up, U
Backwards = Cursor Down, I
Brake/Jump = Space, P
Enter/Exit Vehicle = Enter, W
Attack = Ctrl, 9
Next Weapon = X, Tab
Previous Weapon = Z, Left Shift
Horn = Tab, S
F5 = Retune your car radio.
F6 = Pause Game
F7 = Repeat Last Pager Message
F9 = Display Area Name.
F10 = Repeat last message received.
ESC = Quit Game
F11 = Screen Mode. This key allows you to choose the screen mode most suitable for your PC.

Man of War Demo
Strategy First
Dos Strategy
\games\dos\mowdemo
Set during the age of fighting sail, when the oceans rang with cannon shot and splintering timber. Man of War brings a new element into the Turn based strategy game with the introduction of a 3D first person perspective that lets you experience first hand the saga of an Admiral's life at sea. With a fleet of ships in your charge and a nation's fate in the balance, bear witness to the consequence of your command and change the course of history.
System requirements: Pentium 75, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game is controlled with a mouse.

Utilities
Multiplay Trial
It's not actually a utility,

but it does allow you to connect to one of the hottest multiplayer networks in the country. Included are demo versions of popular software for you to try.

Get Right 3.01
This piece of software will allow you to continue ftp's after your machine has crashed, or the remote server disconnected. Capable of recovering from almost any situation, this is a must install utility.

Patches
Upgrade Monster Sound 3D to 1.0511

Virtual Pool 2

sidelines

Activision are continuing their phoenix-like rise from the grave, and have secured the rights to publish the first three titles from the newly formed 'Redline Games'. Are Activision gambling that Redline will bring home the bacon? You betcha, and with Ronald Millar and James Anhalt heading up Redline, it would seem to be a fairly safe bet. Millar and Anhalt have held prominent programming and design positions on such games as Warcraft2, Mechwarrior2, and Diablo, and their first project for Redline has been tentatively titled '3rd World' - but it's not about multinational corporations raping entire countries for profit. We think.

Creative have jumped on the bandwagon, and are planning to produce their own version of the Voodoo 2 card with 6mb RAM, and expect to have it on sale sometime around the middle of this year. It's the first time that Creative Labs and Diamond Multimedia (who expect to have their Voodoo 2 based card in stores at around the same time) will be seriously going at each other head to head (the 3D Blaster doesn't really count).

All the big companies are starting to think that there's money to be made in online gaming. Sierra is the latest to make a grab for some gamer cash, and may well be scrapping their free SIGS gaming service in favour of an online gaming service in the mould of TEN (though Sierra reckon that they'll be "doing it right this time") - and of course they'll be charging for the privilege of using it to play their games (and others) that you've already payed for. Fantastic! Thanks Sierra! You obviously really care about gamers...

Songoku from Clan Dragon sent us some funny Quake screenshots. There's something a little bit strange about lining up dead bodies in a virtual environment, though...

Pentium 'Fo' bug

A bug found to be in the Pentium and Pentium MMX machines, affectionately known as the "FO" bug, was recently uncovered at the x86 secrets site www.x86.org. The bug happens when a Pentium/Pentium MMX CPU that executes a special combination of four bytes "Fo oF C7 C8" this would normally only result in a trap of an illegal instruction. But for some reason it causes these CPU's to freeze. Intel is currently preparing a work around for the bug. A company calling themselves the Freedom Factory has released their FO Fighter program, which searches programs for this illegal instruction combi- nation. We believe that this isn't a major problem for gamers, as this code would have to be maliciously put in a program to cause your computer to crash. Which hopefully no game writers will do, no need to panic, all is okay!

Alright! Another Pentium bug. This one isn't fatal, but it's always fun to see Intel in panic-mode

Wing Commander: the Movie?

Q: What's the only thing slightly less interactive than a Wing Commander game? A: The Wing Commander movie, of course. Origin have announced that Digital Anvil have secured the TV and movie rights to Wing Commander. Who's Digital Anvil? It's the new company formed by Chris Roberts, late of Origin themselves and creator of the whole WC series. Well, at least we know he can make good cinematic cut scenes...
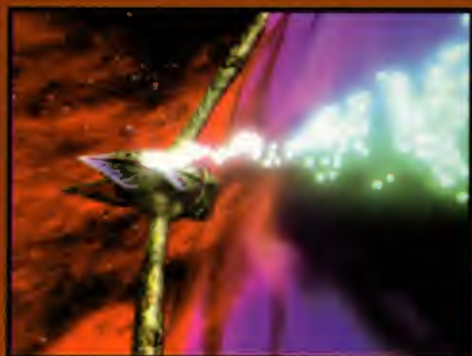
OzEmail buy Access One

Rumours have been circulating for a good long while about how Solution 6 was less than satisfied with the performance of Access One, and after Solution 6 had pumped around $18 million dollars into Aone, and taken it to the third largest ISP in Australia (by market share), OzEmail have stepped in and bought the ISP. They paid around (Aus) 25 million dollars for the business, and OzEmail are reportedly quite happy with the deal. The timing seems strange though, because Aone had recently entered into a partnership of sorts with the newly launched online gaming service, Multiplay TEN, as their premier online service provider. Funnily enough Multiplay TEN have just announced a new partnership of sorts with one.net, the online division of One.Tel (who are best known for their mobile telephone network), and there's no mention of Access One in their press releases nowadays. Ah well, all a gamer wants is a good fast ISP for multiplaying games, and if one.net can live up to its hype the future is looking good for the partnership, and for gamers.

sidelines

Activision have a place close to our hearts for their innovative promotional material (see the GOTY awards), and it seems that the Activision PR people in America are cut from the same cloth. They've just given away a heavily modified 1970 Dodge Charger as a prize for an Interstate '76 promotion, complete with mock 50 calibre machine guns and flame throwers on the roof. Here's the interesting bit, though: The winner was one Michael Probst from Little Rock, Arkansas, who was so overjoyed with his prize that he planned to remove the weaponry and then use the muscle car to go deer hunting. We're thinking his favourite game just might be Redneck Rampage...

It's one of those 'great idea in theory, but in practice...well.... Anyway, Segasoft have created a spiffy little application that allows you to destroy, deface and generally ruin web pages. Well, not really, but the idea is that the Web Vengeance software sits in your desktop tray until you stumble upon a web page with a slow link, and it incurs your wrath at which point you enable the software, and shoot holes in the web page, or throw tomatoes, or molotov cocktails (and so on) at it and gain your revenge. Kinda silly, really, but it's fun for five minutes, and you can save your works of art and send them to friends, or get them up on the Segasoft site if you feel like it.

Legend, Australian makers and distributors of Legend video cards and accessories have opened up a new office in Nedlands, Western Australia. West Australian gamers should be jumping for joy, for Legend make quality cards and because Legend manufacture the cards themselves rather than just distribute them, their prices are very attractive too.

Heavy Gear

Sure it's sold separately, but the Heavy Gear strategy guide is a thing of beauty, reminiscent of the old Star Trek style technical guide complete with full colour schematics

King Cobra   Support Cobra   Striking Cobra
Black Mamba   Jäger Command   Jäger   Blitz Iguana
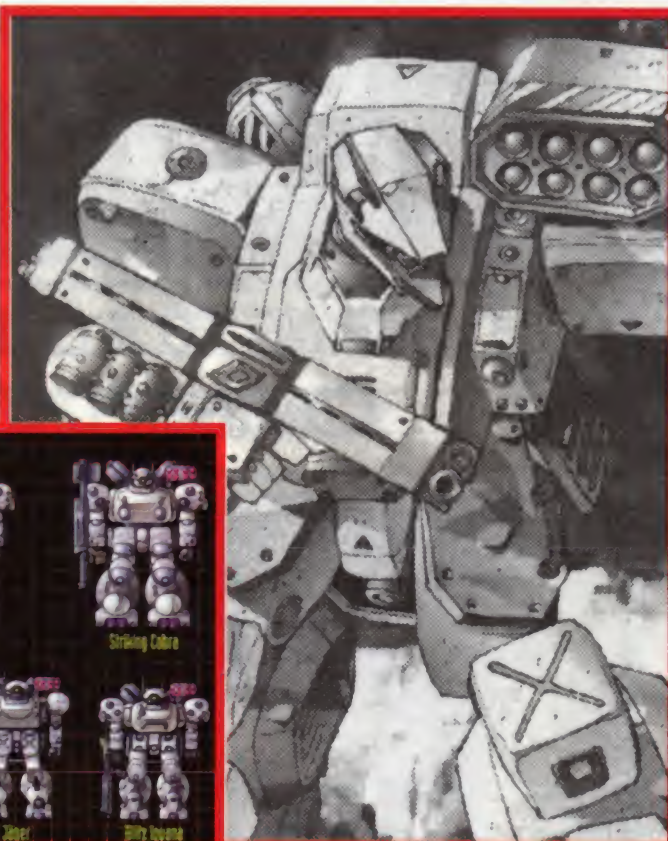
EPSER

THE ESPER IS A PHOTOGRAPH ANALYZER THAT ALLOWS YOU TO ZOOM IN AND PAN AROUND A PICTURE TO LOOK FOR CLUES.

WHEN YOU GET A PHOTOGRAPH, IT WILL BE STORED IN YOUR KIA FOR LATER ... AT POLICE HQ IN THE MAINFRAME ... CLICK ON THE ESPER. PHOTOS ... LECT THE PHOTOGRAPH YOU WISH ... AGGING A BOX TO HIGHLIGHT THE ... OUT BY USING THE RIGHT MOUSE ... TERESTING, A HARD COPY OF THE ... KIA.

... LITTLE PRACTICE, SO BE PATIENT.

WHAT'S AN EPSER?

The great Blade Runner blunder. The manual falls open to the center spread, & there, on the top right (the first place you look, according to publishing science) is an "EPSER". Ha ha!

TOP TEN GAMES

Rank		Title
TW	**LW**	Developer / Distributor
1	**1**	**JEDI KNIGHT: Dark Forces II**
		LUCASARTS / METRO GAMES
2	**4**	**AGE OF EMPIRES**
		MICROSOFT / VARIOUS
3	**6**	**RIVEN**
		BUNGIE-BRODERBUND / WOLF INTERACTIVE
4	**3**	**TOTAL ANNIHILATION**
		CAVEDOG / GT INTERACTIVE
5	**-**	**C & C: Aftermath**
		WESTWOOD / SEGA OZISOFT
6	**5**	**MS FLIGHT SIM '98**
		MICROSOFT / VARIOUS
7	**7**	**NEED FOR SPEED 2 (Spec.ed.)**
		ELECTRONIC ARTS / ELECTRONIC ARTS
8	**2**	**DARK REIGN**
		AURAN & ACTIVISION / ROADSHOW
9	**8**	**QUAKE**
		ID SOFTWARE / ROADSHOW
10	**17**	**SIM CITY 2000 (Special ed.)**
		MAXIS / ELECTRONIC ARTS

Week ending 16th November

Say Bye-Bye

It been just about 8 months since the big shake up at 7th Level when founder George Grayson was ousted and the fledgling company was refocused. Well, it's been refocused again. 7th Level, the makers of Krondor, the Monty Python series, Ace Ventura and other games, will be buying Pulse Entertainment and changing its name to P7 Solutions. The company will now focus on Internet development for business and entertainment.

It looks as those there will be no more games from 7th Level, especially since they have sold their game making unit PyroTechnix and their last game still in throes of production Return To Krondor is being "co-developed" with ION Storm. There is no word on what will happen to the Monty Python Internet site. The Monty Python games will now be distributed by Take Two. Take Two is giving 7th Level, or whatever its name is, $1.5 million in advance. Over Christmas, Take Two distributed the latest title, Monty Python's Meaning of Life while Monty Python's.... And Now For Something Completely Different will be hitting the shelves soon. By the way, Monty Python's Complete Waste of Time and Monty Python and The Quest for the Holy Grail so far have generated $15 million in sales. Not bad, huh? Nudge, nudge, wink, wink!

Play Mysty for Me

You either hate it or love it, but there's no getting around the fact that MYST is the biggest selling game of all time. Jeez, it's been three years and the game is still selling well. So will MYST's sequel live up to expectations? Well, so far so good. Broderbund, who publishes RIVEN for developer Cyan, says RIVEN sold a hundred thousand units (PC DATA) in its first week out. Which is very respectable for a computer game.

COMDEX

Last year's COMDEX trade show had hardly any game publishers in attendance, but that's not the case this year. This trade show, being held in Las Vegas, is much smaller than E3 and has more than just software exhibits. There's smart televisions, toasters and about million cellular telephones. Sure a few gaming companies are showing their stuff, which you'll hear more about in the future since there are no real revelations. The big news is that STB, Electronic Arts, NVIDIA, and Samsung Electronics are co-hosting the Third Annual Game Players Tournament. Start your engines! Because contestants will be playing networked MotoRacer. Winners will share a pot worth $25,000 in cash and prizes. The gaming times sure are a changing.

Over A Billion Sold!

No, we're not talking hamburgers here. We're talking electronic games. The IDSA (Interactive Digital Software Association) believes when all the counting is over, that 1997 will be a record setting sales year for video and computer games. As a matter of fact, the estimate now is that sales will break $5 billion. Yep, that's a lot cash out lays for us poor slobs who would rather buy a game than pay the rent. Video console games are still outselling PC games, for now. Almost one billion dollars was spent on PC games from January through September 1997. The biggest game sellers, according to the IDSA, were trivia, strategy and sports games. Almost fifty percent of game sales occur in the last four months of the year, so we should know soon just what the final figures are. By the way, just who are playing games? The IDSA say people playing consoles are evenly divided between under 18 and over 18 years of age. PC gamers, on the other hand, are almost all over 18 (72.8%) and half of that 72% are over age 36! While unscientific, I believe there are more younger PC gamers and more are crossing over everyday. But that's just me.

Journeyman Awards

Congrats to the Journeyman Project 3: Legacy of Time for grabbing 6 NewMedia INVISION awards — including the Gold Award for Best Adventure/Role Playing Title. Broderbund's Red Orb division is publishing the title which was acquired from Sanctuary Woods when they quit making adult games over a year ago. Presto Studios is the designer who was given the Award of Excellence for Best Animation, while also receiving Gold Awards for Best Animation and Best Overall Design-Title, and two Silver Awards for Best Graphics-Title and Best Audio-Soundtrack.

JP3: Legacy of Time was given the awards out of a field of almost 900 entries. The 51 categories judged include entertainment titles. The well-respected NewMedia Magazine, who covers the technical world of development tools, sponsors the annual awards. Journeyman Project 3: Legacy of Time will be released in early 1998.

Legacy of time won plenty of awards - and these shots show why!

There are so many rumours floating around in the UK at present that it's hard to get a handle on any of them, but often there's no smoke without fire. First up is that Eidos is in trouble, heard that one? To strengthen that, Core, (a division of Eidos), appears to have been approached by Sega who want to buy out this division. Core brought us Tomb Raider 1 & 2, and Fighting Force.

GTI Rule

GTI is now gearing up to become the largest software company in the world. With the immediate buy out of Microprose, the company intend to keep on most of the UK development teams, stick with the strong brand name and ensure more sims and products are forthcoming. You may not know, but most of the major hits from this company, like the X-Com series, have come from the European division!

Spanish Fancy

Watch out for a title called Behind Enemy Lines from a Spanish developer. Published by Eidos, the Spanish team have come up with some really stunning graphical effects and an interface that will possibly set a new trend in action strategy games. Not satisfied with split screens, the team cut the screen into four sec-

Headbanging

If you're into Iron Maiden and Ed Hunter, a fictional character that the group used on their covers, you can look forward to a head bashing, hard rocking, tough shooting action game from Synthetic Dimensions called Ed Hunter. Blast-em-ups aren't all that cool, but this one certainly should hit the mark as it is not a mere licence. Synthetic brought us Raven and Chronicles of the Sword and have placed most of their emphasis on cutting edge technology - this may be the first real 3D game that actually works. Yes, don those red and green specs and you will physically be moving out of the way! So impressed are a number of publishers they have offered the team loads of dosh for their innovative 3D system. The game itself features music from the band and some very intriguing and immersive levels all based around the bands album covers.

tions, enabling you to see action on one, zoom in on another, whilst looking at the overall view from a third. When you see this you will be gob smacked, and this must be marked down as the first really big hit of 98 when it's released in March!
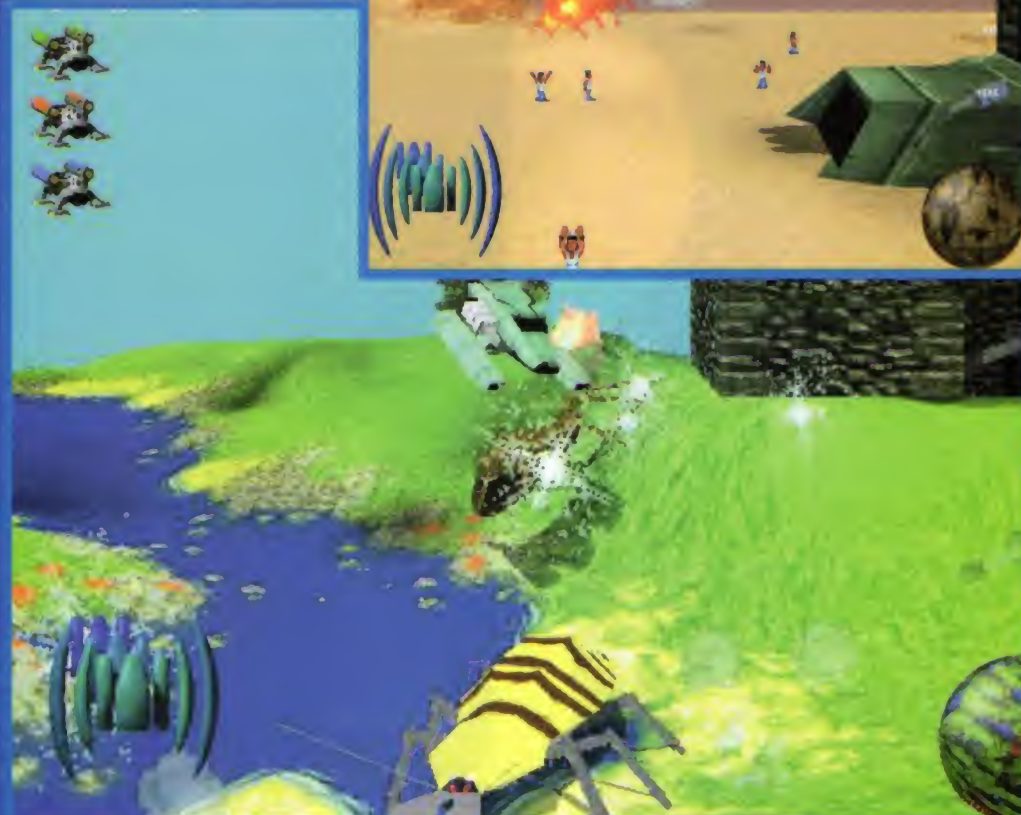
Elite 3 - Best of British

No, we won't see Elite 3 from David Braben in the near future, because at present he is putting the final touches to V2000 which is essentially Virus reincarnated (that weird looking flying game where you flew over a patchwork quilt like landscape). Elite was released on the Amiga and C64 although David will bring it up to date on the PC with bells and whistles utilising everything he can, he wants the game to have a retro look and as you will see from the screen shots, it looks weird but by all accounts is immensely addictive.

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As you'd know, the SUBSCRIPTION prizes are always amazing, and this month is no exception. Check out these

ACS 500 Integrated Multimedia Surround Sound speakers.

They're black and they're loud, which is probably all you need to know. But here's more: The ACS 500's are a 3-piece set with 2 satellite speakers and one mother of a subwoofer. Pump up the gaming volume and enter a new dimension of gaming excellence.

Worth *$300* each, that makes a whopping *$1800* worth of gaming goodness being given away.

Thanks to Innovision Technology we've got *6* sets of these miracles of gaming technology to give away to SUBSCRIBERS and/or renewers this month.

WIN!

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B Reed, Gavin QLD

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PC PowerPlay SPECIAL EDITIONS winners:

Hot Hardware Guide
(Apocalypse 5D)
M Cregan, Lismore NSW
G Ford, Kalgoorlie WA
W Underwood, New Town, TAS

Game Guide '97
(Incredibly amazing prize pack from Metro Games)
B Fuller, Ferntree Gully VIC

COMPETITIONS

FIFA 98

Write the answer, along with your name and address on the back of an envelope. All entries close January 23, 1997 Entries to: PC PowerPlay, 78 Renwick st. Redfern NSW 2016

FIFA 98

It's a stunner. A 95% PC PowerPlay Platinum award knockout game from hell. It looks amazing, plays amazing and smells amazing. You need this game if you like soccer. You also need this game if you don't, it's a top play, gameplay-wise. Check out the review on page 62 if you don't believe what you're reading here.

The talented experts at EA have kindly dumped 6 copies on us for a competition, so, here it is!
Q. Pick your own perfect World 11 team! Our own Gareth Jones, whose fanatical interest in the sport verges on the scary, will select the winner.

Heavy Gear

Mech'n here, mech'n there, mech'n almost everywhere! It's a great way to get around. Who needs wheels! Who needs an AM/FM car stereo for in-car entertainment when you're packing atomic missile batteries for your idle amusement... Great stuff!

Forget the monorail, mechs are the preferred mass-transit system of the future, according to the civic planning experts at PC PowerPlay. Now you too can savour the delights of mech'n' around with the excellent simulation from Activision, Heavy Gear.

We've got a full review this issue so you can find out what it's really all about, we loved it! 6 copies to win from Activision, who are winners too.
Q. What outstanding games development company did the brilliant Mechwarrior 2?

Myth

Real-time strategy with a funky 3D environment and impressive 3D soldiers who maim and mutilate each other in splendid 16-bit colour. What a gaming delight Myth has turned out to be! Intended originally for the Mac, we lesser PC'ers have been granted a version, primarily as an answer to the only conceivable argument Mac users could have used against the clear superiority of the PC platform. Macs eh? Who needs them! Myth is a top game and we'd like to extend a warm thanks to Impact, the game's distributors for the 6 copies we're going to give away.
Q. What 1st-person action game did the developers of Myth produce?

Myth

Puma World Football '98

It's the season to be soccer. Everyone wants a piece of the action and some great things are happening. Foremost is the indoor soccer team fielded by Next Media, and to a lesser extent, the World Cup. Yes, it's a good time to be a soccer fan.

Being a soccer fan, you really ought to be playing Puma World Football 98 from the good people at Ubisoft. It's got that old familiar black and white ball, the regulation count of players, enthusiastically vocal crowds and acres of computer-simulated grass, Magic. There are 6 up for grabs!
Q. In what year did the "Hand of God" appear in the World Cup?

"**T**HE RED SERPENTINE DRAGON CROUCHES LOW IN THE JADE DARK GRASS. COMING AROUND THE CORNER, HE POUNCES UPON YOU..."

There they are, the words on your computer screen. Maybe they're delivered as some actor's digitized voice through your speakers. It's not the delivery that so much matters to you, but the quality. Maybe you've done some writing. Maybe you've even been published. You think to yourself again and again, "Who on earth is writing this stuff. I know, I just

National Guild of Tax Attorneys. At the end of the listings, under Writer Needed, was a simple 13 word classified that read: "Published Writer of Science-Fiction or Fantasy Stories Wanted. P.O. Box Blah, Rockville, Maryland." I wasn't going to respond, since there wasn't even a name of the company, but after writing up fifty or so cover letters for normal jobs, I decided for my own amusement to write one up to this unknown company. If I remember correctly, the cover letter read: "Dear P.O., I never apply to companies which don't give their names in the classifieds. I also don't think that writing science-fiction and fantasy short stories is the way to fame and fortune, but

Ted: I usually start up with writing a list up I call "Cool Experiences." A cool experience is anything that someone playing the game would tell a good friend about the next day, as in "The coolest thing happened when I was playing Tomb Raider last night. I climbed down out of this cave and found this lost valley. I start walking forward when I hear, far off, this stomping sound. Gradually it came nearer and the sound got louder and louder. Suddenly, my screen was shaking and out from around the bend comes this fifty-

WHERE DO GAMES COME FROM?

Games industry workers in profile, part 3.
by Brenda Garneau

know, I could do it better."

Chances are, you're right. According to Ted Peterson, a writer and a designer with Activision, the computer gaming industry lacks good writers. An art form that's still evolving, much of the writing in computer games isn't done by professional staff wordsmiths at all. Instead, it's almost an afterthought pencilled together by the design team or contracted out to writers whose understanding of a particular genre may be limited at best.

While writing magazines trumpet headlines like, "Write Scripts for the Computer Industry!" and "New Frontiers in Computer Gaming!", the reality is it's the toughest market of all to crack.

In our continuing behind the scenes interview, Ted tells you how to get in, what to do once you're there and gives you a look into a day in the life of a writer and a designer of computer games.

The Writer

Ted: I moved to Washington, DC, shortly after graduating from college in North Carolina with a degree in English Literature. I had intended to live in Virginia, right outside DC, for a year to get state residency and then go on to graduate school. Of course, I had to get a job in the meanwhile, so I got a copy of the Sunday Washington Post and started sending out resumes. Of course, DC being the capitol and all, they were mostly jobs to write the American Society of Dental Surgeons newsletter or manuals for the

Game writing inspiration source no.1 - the complete works of William Shakespeare

against my better judgment, I'm sending you a copy of my resume and some writing samples. The only thing I should add is that I'm a recent college graduate, perfectly normal in every way, except that when the full moon comes out, I grow a third eye and butterfly wings. Yours truly, Ted Peterson." Well, of course, Bethesda Softworks called the next day. [Laughs] The lesson in this, I suppose, is that the industry likes weirdoes.

Ted: When I was younger, yes, I was into games. Old fashioned pen-and-paper role-playing games more so than computer games, but I remember particularly liking the original Ultima and Wolfenstein. Still, I hadn't played computer games in years before I came into the industry, and I had to play some considerable catch-up.

THE WRITER: TED PETERSON

foot tall T. Rex!" After a good-sized list of ten to fifteen cool experiences have been written up, I share them with the chief programmer, so we can have a basis to discuss what the game engine will need to do to make these cool experiences possible. What kind of an engine the game will require, how big and detailed the game world will need to be, what kind of art resources will be needed, that kind of thing. Not all of the cool experiences will make it to the final game, but whenever one does, it will yield several permutations.

For example, once it was determined that you could become a vampire in Daggerfall, it wasn't much of a stretch to say you could also become a werewolf.

PCPP: As we work to make games more multi-player, stories, by necessity, take a back seat. How do you create an interactive world with an actual story in such an environment. Do the environment and the players become the story?

Ted: Games just aren't a good vehicle for telling stories. They can do the job, and we're used to them trying their damndest to force players to do something in a particular order at a particular pace to have the story and tension work right, but it's like making a flock of hummingbirds pull a plow. They're just not doing the sorts of things they're good at doing. By their natures, stories have a linear progression with a beginning, a middle and an end. There may be an over-story in a game about what's happened before, what's happening now, and what the likely scenarios are going to be down the road, but it seems to me that we're not acknowledging the strength of computer games, character participation, if we make these over-stories into the stories of the game. I'm not saying that it can't be done well, and that we can't come to care about the character we're given and the path he or she must take, but at the same time, we don't expect our movies to give us interactivity. Why should we expect our games to give us a linear story? I alluded to this problem with telling stories with games in the introduction in the Daggerfall manual. When a potential player would ask me as the writer-designer, "What's the story in this game?" I tried to imagine the historical 15th century Richard III asking Shakespeare what the story is. If you're the lead character in a drama, the story is what you make of it, how you react to the world as it is and the opportunities and obstacles you're given. Even though he could have easily been a hero, Shakespeare had Richard III say, "I am determined to prove a villain," and that should be your choice when you play a game.

PCPP: One of biggest problems I've seen personally, Ted, are writers entering the industry still in the "book" frame of mind, very linear story telling. There's a Catch-22 here. The industry wants depth and story, but God forbid we make it linear. That's impossible as you elude to. At the same time, if we create a world that's really freeform and give a highly nonlinear game, there's a fear that there will be no story or, at worst, the players will completely miss it because they wandered over to X when they should have been at Y. Why do you think there is a fear of nonlinear environments?

Ted: Well, part of the Game Industry's fear of the nonlinear world is, I think, related to their disregard for the intelligence of the public, and it's something that anyone who's interested in writing in this industry should know about. Given a world to create our own stories, few of us are going to put together an experience which would read like Turgenev to anyone on the outside. The stories would be satisfying and personal, but not, perhaps, universally eloquent. If we had writers and designers who were putting together linear stories which came together like Turgenev or

Dickens, I'd say, "Hey, you're doing everything great. Keep it up." But we're not. The reality is, and you'll see it when you begin to create a game, is that we're putting together game experiences, not novels or great stories. Compared to books, mind you, they are both mediocre and limiting. If I had my way, at worst they'd just be mediocre. You try to create a setting, I think, a place where the player's own imagination can take them. You set up situations that may turn things this way or that. You're not able to create a full story on the computer, but rather the illusion of one. That's what you hope to do.

PCPP: What game stands out to you as the proper way to design and write a game from a story point of view? Something people could look at as an example.

Ted: None of them, yet, really. Oh, I think that the Wing Commanders and Gabriel Knights had interesting stories to tell, and they told them, for the most part, well. I've heard good things about the storyline in the Neverhood, but when I realized that I had to walk through thirty-two rooms to read all the story, and once I reached the end, it was a dead-end, I deleted the game from my hard-drive. I think I also might've used the CD to crush walnuts. But, overall, we have a long way to go in this department.

PCPP: Why would someone want to be a writer in the games industry more than anything else?

Ted: Well, to a greater or larger degree, all writers are really writer-designers or writer-producers in this industry, unless they're writing the game manuals, of course. Probably the reason to get into it is the fun of riding a bucking bronco. It's the same reason it must have been exciting to be a screenwriter or director when movies were new. It's not very often a new medium is invented, and I find it really stimulating to be involved while the art form is being developed. I can usually raise a few eyebrows when I refer to

The Stats

The Money

The Software Publishers Association didn't have salary figures for game writers. An informal survey of five different game writers in the industry, however, shows the figure to be in the $40,000 USD range.

The Mind

According to Ted, it isn't so much the technical things you know or your mastery of grammar. Rather, it's your ability to be creative and retain vast amounts of, essentially, useless knowledge that will make or break you as a writer in this industry. He recommends:

1. Some Kind of Industry Experience. "This is a new one; it was easier to get in 5 years when I did. Activision, and I know we're not alone in this, won't hire anyone to a design position without prior industry experience. This experience may be as a tester, a writer for one of the trade papers, a QA representative, whatever. But nowadays, companies want people who have a clue about what they're getting into."

2. Built-in, Shock-proof Shit-Detector. "Yeah, I know, Hemingway said it first. The amount of writing that the average role-playing or adventure game requires is staggering, and the time you have to write it in is minuscule. Yeah, it may take a year or two to get a game out, but you'll going to make revisions every step along the way with, if you're lucky, hours to make them in."

3. Ability to write quickly, clearly, economically, correctly, and well. "I didn't mention that the writing should be 'humorous' or 'epic' or 'horrific' in content, but obviously, if you're working on a horror game, you should be writing appropriately. Oh, and when I say 'economically,' please try and remember that the writing should be short. Long speeches and explanations are three times as tedious in a game as they are in movies, plays, or books."

4. Confidence in this ability and a paradoxical humility. "This paradox of being confident in your writing and still humble is necessary for people new to this industry. You need to have both traits in order to survive. You don't know everything, and there are a lot of mistakes that others can warn you about. Besides no one likes a smarmy, little know-it-all punk whose salary comes from the games his or her more experienced co-workers created. On the other hand, because you are going to make mistakes, bad ones, and be yelled at for them, you should know in your heart that you are good enough for the job."

5. An honest love of games and an interest in making games. This, you would think, is self-evident, but gaming companies are filled with writers and designers who would rather be making movies. Not only are they seldom very good at writing and designing games since they can't help but think of things in a linear fashion, but they are doomed to unhappiness. Furthermore, after all the grousing they're likely to do, even their most kindhearted co-workers are wishing that misery on them.

6. A sense of humor about what is essentially an absurd job.

7. Lots of luck.

8. Intimate knowledge of a lot of obscure stuff.

SO FLASH GORDON SETS OUT ON A PERILOUS BUT ALL-IMPORTANT VENTURE - A DARING, ONE-MAN RESCUE EXPEDITION AGAINST FEARFUL ODDS.

as many people during your interview as possible. It's nice to talk to whoever your supervisor is going to be, obviously, but ask if you can talk to other people, particularly people who are doing the job that you're going to do. They can give you a good idea about employee morale and problems within the company. Ask about the hierarchy of the company and find out who reports to whom and whether there's friction about that. There's always going to be some dark clouds, and you want to know that administration is aware of them and trying to do something to remedy the situation. If you do decide to take the job, you'll be forewarned and prepared for the pitfalls.

PCPP: What are the biggest issues affecting the profession right now? Things people should be aware of.

Ted: Well, there's always the issue of the ratings system and censorship. A lot of stuff has been written about Senator Lieberman's committee and putting ratings on computer games. The problem, of course, comes in games which are open-ended and free-form, like Daggerfall, where you can do and see a lot of things, some of which aren't very nice, and some of which are very nice, but nice in an adult way. [Laughs] Put it this way, because games like that allow you freedom to do what you want to do, you can murder innocent people, join orgiastic cults, be a paid assassin, et cetera, et cetera. But you don't have to do these things, and there are consequences to living a monstrous life. The ratings board gave Daggerfall a rating equivalent to "downfall of Western Civilization," and Lieberman listed it as one of the top ten corrupters of children. I think he might've said that slow ingestion of gasoline would be preferable, but that might be apocryphal.

You have to think about these things, not only when you're considering making a game

designing and writing for software as an art, as valid an art as painting and writing novels, but I do think it has that potential. Certainly, it took decades for novels and movies to achieve respectability as an art form, for someone to get on the shoulders of the people who had experimented with the form before and really show the magic. We're not there yet, but I think we might nearly be there. I think that's a good reason for a writer to get involved, a desire to do something completely different, something which isn't a novel, poem, short story or a play. A reason that's less lofty is that there aren't a lot of good writers in the industry. If you can actually get your writing in a game and get yourself recognized, you can be a big fish in a little pond. I think most gamers can recognize good writing, but they've had to put up with middling stuff for so long, they've gotten used to it. There might be a few bucks to make in that, not as much as people make in the movie industry, but enough to keep you in booze. And that's what's important.

PCPP: Suppose someone out there is at square one. They have writing talent and a desire to do this. How do you recommend they break into the industry? What's the best way?

Ted: It's a different industry now then it was when I entered it. It's much, much more competitive. What do I recommend? If there's one particular company that you want to work for, I'd recommend going straight after them and getting a job at any level you can: tester, administrative assistant, receptionist, janitor, accountant, whatever. Then, go find the designers and befriend them.

Don't start off by making suggestions and offering game ideas. See what they need help doing - I can guarantee that there's something-and volunteer your assistance on weekends or evenings. That'll give you a taste for the glamorous designer's life and let you see if it's what you want to do or not. Most designers I know became designers by moving into that position after doing something else for a while.

PCPP: What's the other side to that, Ted. As someone who's been around a bit, what should people look out for?

Ted: After working at four companies so far, two of which are no longer with us, the lesson I've learned is to look very closely at how experienced your teammates are. Your teammates not only include your fellow designers, writers, producers, programmers, and artists, but also the marketing and P.R., finance, distribution, and administration departments. If the company is a start-up, and there's a great attraction to being one of the founders of a start-up, find out how they're financed, whether the money is really "in the bank," and how soon they have to start making a profit. Is the project you'll be working on officially "green lit" by administration or not? I know a dozen people who got hired on by a company, only to have the project they were going to be working on canceled the day after they arrived. Try to talk to

"I think most gamers can recognize good writing, but they've had to put up with middling stuff for so long, they've gotten used to it. There might be a few bucks to make in that, not as much as people make in the movie industry, but enough to keep you in booze. And that's what's important."

for the U.S. market, but overseas. When I first started, I remember going to the European Computer Trade Show (ECTS) in London and being asked whether this game or that game was going to be available on the Amiga. Reporter after reporter would show up from "Amiga Fun!" and "Amiga Joy!" magazines, with black looks in their eyes. Nowadays the PC market outside the United States can almost account for half the sales of a product. That means not only do you have do consider certain countries' standards - like

you can't kill "humans" in a computer game in Germany, so blood must be colored green so it's clear that what you're killing is alien - but you have to deal with the whole subject of localization. Usually, localization just means "translating," but it can be a lot more.

Of course, censorship and localization aren't the biggest issue, but I didn't want to begin with the answer every programmer and producer has. The biggest issue in design has to be the Internet and multiplayer gaming. So far in my experience (and I'm only beginning work on my first Internet game now) it doesn't effect writing much, except that it encourages nonlinear, freeform situations. You don't want your players to be going through your linear game like it was a conga line. But the design issues are quite another bucket of clams.

PCPP: It's really in its infancy isn't it? You know, who do you follow? What works?

Ted: Yeah. You know, is the Doom model of limited worlds with limited actions and limited players a viable one for the future? How about the Ultima Online model? Is a persistent world with thousands of people on-line going to have more idiosyncratic problems than Bruno the Bearded Baby? Even in the best of situations, are players just going to feel like just one of the pack in a world like that: not getting to be hero or villain, just Citizen #4534? The fun thing is that none of us know the answers to any of this, and we don't even know if we're asking the right questions. All we know is that this has to be the way things are supposed to go. The Internet was made for gaming, to make playing a role-playing game or a shooter as social an occasion as our parents' games of poker and bridge.

Finally, as games become more and more expensive to make, designers are faced with those mutant hordes who have plagued Hollywood since movies became big business: marketing execs. Much to the consternation of accountants and marketing types, there is no formula for a hit product of any kind. If it were all just a question of following market surveys, every movie out of Hollywood would be a blockbuster and every writer who wants to break into this business or the movie business would be loaded. More and more people are buying computer games, but the industry is still faced with a supersaturated Glory or Death market, a technological base that's constantly changing and exploding costs of production. It's little wonder we've got execs musing, "We could probably keep the wolves from the door if we have a big hit like Myst or Doom. Go make us one of those." Different equals risky and risky equals bad. We can't alienate the core gamer who feeds us, but we need to expand our audience. It's almost impossible. You know, while I'm on the subject of selling out, I'd like to address the question that people keep asking us role-playing gurus on the street. "What gives with the nudity, madness, depravity, promiscuity, unwarranted violence, and general references to child abuse, satanism, sadism, prostitution, necrophilia, and sexual perversion that permeates role-playing games? Do you really need that to sell your product?" For once and for all, we don't do that for any commercial reason. We do it because we think it's fun. Help us. We're sick.

"The ratings board gave Daggerfall a rating equivalent to "downfall of Western Civilization," and Lieberman listed it as one of the top ten corrupters of children."
(above) Ted Peterson hard at work. Nice to see that the makers of games we've interviewed have a very healthy sense of humour. A special sort of sanity is required for this wonderful industry

GAME
★ OF THE ★
YEAR

OVERALL WINNER

Diablo

It was close. Red Alert came within a mere 2 dozen votes out of thousands, but Diablo won out in the end. It's official, then, Diablo is the Game of the Year, and deservedly so. One of the first big games to have its own dedicated server, which despite some very annoying cheaters, is still plenty of fun to play right up until this day and probably beyond. For many of us, including the PowerPlay staff, the release of Diablo pre-sented quite a few problems. Relationships were put on hold, personal hygiene was for-gotten, a suspiciously high number of sick days were used up, all because of the addic-tive qualities of this very fine game. Second was Red Alert, which surprised us. Sure, we gave it a high mark upon initial review, but even with the addition of the numerous add-on packs we still didn't think that it would rate quite as highly as it did. Other notable runners-up were X-Wing V Tie Fighter, which came third as well as picking up top hon-ours in other fields as well. Also among the votes were Tomb Raider, QuakeWorld, Moto Racer and Carmageddon – all games of decent quality. The only other notable event was the number of people who didn't read the fine print - how many people voted for Total Annihilation or Dark Reign? Too bloody many. Come on people, you'll have to wait until next year, ok?

PCPowerPlay
G.O.T.Y
Game Of The Year

3Dfx Competition Winners

C. Waddy Pymble, NSW / M. Purcell Risden Vale, Tas. / C. Edman Jolimont, WA
C. Reid Port Augusta, SA / W. Carr Ellen Grove, QLD / E. Pepper Boolarra, Vic.

Adventure

WINNER: DogDay
RUNNER UP: City of Lost Children

Puzzle

WINNER: Bust-a-move
RUNNER UP: Baku Baku

Action Adventure

WINNER: Diablo
RUNNER UP: MDK

Australian Game

WINNER: DogDay
RUNNER UP: (TIE) KKnD/Cricket '97

Driving

WINNER: Interstate '76
RUNNER UP: Need for Speed 2

Fantasy Sim

WINNER: X-Wing vs. TIE
RUNNER UP: Privateer 2

1st Person Shooter

WINNER: Quake mission packs
RUNNER UP: Duke Nuken 3D

Flight Sim

WINNER: AH64D Longbow
RUNNER UP: A-10 Cuba

Multiplayer

WINNER: X-Wing vs. TIE
RUNNER UP: Diablo

Online Games

WINNER: Hoverrace
RUNNER UP: Subspace

Online RPG

WINNER: Ultima Online
RUNNER UP: The Realm

Turn based Strategy

WINNER: X-Com3: apocalypse
RUNNER UP: Magic: the gathering

RPG

WINNER: Lands of Lore 2
RUNNER UP: Daggerfall

Real time Strategy

WINNER: Red Alert
RUNNER UP: Theme Hospital

Sports

WINNER: Cricket '97
RUNNER UP: FIFA '97

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PC PowerPlay

The votes are in, and the PowerPlay audience have spoken - and spoken really really loudly too. We were expecting plenty of votes to be cast, but the sheer volume of response both online and through the post blew us away completely. We had to rope in a work experience guy for a whole week just to sort through them all (thanks Josh!). This whole award thing got us started thinking (which was a scary moment for all concerned) though, and here's some other awards we came up with - some good, some bad, but all noteworthy events which have taken place each year.

Patience testers:

Sadly, lots of competition in this category. It's the 'games we're still f(*&king waiting for' category.

WINNER: ULTIMA ONLINE - for possibly never ever coming to our shores.

RUNNERS UP:

Falcon 4 - 3 years late, but still "coming soon".

Sin, Unreal, Prey - Pretty screenshots, where's the goddamn game!?!?

Red Baron 2, European Air War - what is it with flight sims?

Tiberium Sun - remember the end 'sneak preview' sequence from C&C, 2 years ago?

Best Promotion of homosexual rights in a game:

SIM COPTER - The 1 in 10 end of game 'Mardi Gras' sequence with lots of fellas getting up close and personal with eachother. One for the kiddies to enjoy.

Dumbest promotional item sent to us:

WINNER ENTIRE CAR DOOR - Activision for Interstate '76. "Window goes down, window goes up, window goes down, window goes...where's the bin?"

RUNNERS UP:

Boxes (and boxes) of scrap metal - Activision (again) for Mechwarrior. Great work guys!

Eviscerated teddy bear - Roadshow for Disruptor. Why?

The Mark Hamill 'crappy acting in an FMV sequence' award:

There's only one name that can rival Mr Hamill in the crappy FMV acting department, and he showed us just what he's capable of this year. The indomitable **MR WILLIAM SHATNER**, in all his festy glory showed us once again that talent and skill aren't pre-requisites for FMV actors. We love ya Bill!

Most successful diet by a game character:

LARA, apart from having a breast reduction, managed to shed those unsightly kilos around the waistline as well. Something all girls should aspire to - a waist that can be encircled with a baby's pinkie finger. Thanks for showing us that Anorexia isn't a dirty word, Lara!

(clockwise from top left) Falcon 4 - where?, Lara Mk.II - impossible tummy, Taurus & Groove - funk that, Red Alert - tanks, f*#king tanks, Bill - consumate thespian, Twinsen's - naked ellipsoids

Most gratuitous use of scantily clad females:

Another tough category to judge, there's just so many female characters and so little clothing.

WINNER: TWINSENS ODDSEY for placing a half naked lady on a beach for no reason whatsoever.

RUNNERS UP:

M002 - One word. Elerians.

Shadow Warrior - Manga style half naked ladies placed around levels for no apparent reason. Fantastic!

Shadows over Riva - For the innovative way to improve troop morale - visit the local brothel!

Meat Puppet - for Lotus looking almost exactly like Posh Spice without much clothing. Lotus gets bonus points for not singing, though.

Coolest intro sequence:

Lots of quality to choose from here, and the best part is that most were actually good games too.

WINNER: INTERSTATE '76 - took schlock to a whole new level. I'76 also wins the award for sharpest threads worn by game characters, man, funkiest soundtrack, and coolest promotional shirts (just says 'Get Funked' on the front, which is great for scaring old people with).

RUNNERS UP:

Syndicate Wars - Great atmospheric intro, and fantastic music.

Privateer 2 - Emotionally hard hitting, innocent women and children dying everywhere, baddies running rampant. Great stuff!

Star Trek Academy - The only thing that kept this extremely impressive intro from first place was Wooden Bill. We love ya Bill!

Most anticipated, yet ultimately disappointing game:

WINNER: RED ALERT. You may disagree, but RA was a multiplayer dog. Why? Tanks.

RUNNERS UP:

Betrayal at Antara - Krondor set the high water mark a couple of years back, but Antara did nothing new, and the puzzles sucked too. Sad, really.

Privateer 2 - A great intro does not a great game make.

FIFA 97 - It was a dark day when EA decided to let this decidedly average title sully their name. FIFA 98 looks and plays bucketloads better though.

Dungeon Keeper - Sounded good in theory, and almost worked. But really, could have been so much better.

And finally, the PowerPlay staff favourite game of the year:

After a long period of heated and inebriated discussion, and after we'd finally talked Ben out of imposing Editor's veto on anything that wasn't Harpoon '97, it has been decided that our overall most favourite game of the past year was none other than.....(drum roll please)...**M002!** Brilliant hard core anal retentive strategy...and Elerians. Oh, and Malcolm wants us to say something about Quake for Macs. Fine. Quake for Macs came out, and 5% of the computer owning population went wild with joy - a year after the other 95%.

CYBERSWINE

Two things you probably didn't know about Cyberswine:

1. It's not a game, not in the traditional sense anyway.

2. It's Australian.

CyberSwine is the closest media to the term "Interactive Movie" to date. Using a high-tech realtime 3D engine to generate scripted scenes, it eclipses standard video in terms of flexibility, portability and space considerations.

CyberSwine places you in command of a cybernetic Porcine Policeman, in a decaying civil disaster. A sinister corporation, "FarmTech", has been distributing a cure-all genetically engineered vaccine for all known illness, known as "HealthX". The Police force are required to take a dose, and refusing to do this lands our heroine Sara Lee in trouble, specifically to "BabySit" the inexperienced robotic CyberSwine. During their first patrol together, tensions arise and emotions flare as a mass takeover is staged by an unknown faction, chaos reigns and the feisty Sara is not appreciating having to look after her grotesque and clueless charge. CyberSwine, with his tough-guy attitude, bristles at his partner's heckling, unless you tell him not to!

Multipath Movie

Yes, the story would be predictably linear and predefined if you weren't playing a "Multipath Movie", which lets you select the most appropriate actions and behaviours for the moment. And moment it is, as you are given about five seconds of time (through which the movie continues to roll) in which to make your True/False decision. If you fail to respond in time, CyberSwine goes with his default behaviour model, for better or for worse. What's great about that is it's completely seamless. The movie doesn't stop or slow down at all during the decision process, and really is a subtle incursion into the experience. You can choose, for instance, to let CyberSwine make all his own decisions and let the story unfold like an ordinary movie. In this way it is more effective in involving the player because there is no static interruptions where you are forced to choose anything. You can either direct it or go with the flow. And while CyberSwine is aimed at a 13+ teen market, it is still entirely entertaining and absorbing, partly due to the unique interactivity.

Eventually you will be able to put "Episodic Updates" to CyberSwine and other multipath movies via the internet, in half-hour blocks, at roughly $2.50 each! Bargain, that!

Also worthy of mention are the planned future titles for the format, including Hercules and Xena Warrior Princess TV conversions, as well as classics like Popeye and (hold your breath) the "Choose your own Adventure" Book series. Remember those? Yep, the whole series!

Brilliant also has arrangements with Morgan Creek (creators of Ace Ventura: Multipath version coming soon!) to produce feature-length interactive movies.

D/L the next episode

Brilliant Digital Entertainment has developed this new format of interactive media towards reaching a larger market of people than just those interested in computer gaming, rather, people with interests of a cinematic nature and of a particular taste. "Multipath Movies", as they are called, will make interactive movies purchasable via the internet and also highly compressible onto a CD-ROM due to their lean size once encoded. The secret is to convert the cinematic concept into 3D objects, and control them using a preprogrammed "Script". The 3D graphics engine then simply has to render the objects as they animate under the script's direction. It is not exactly photorealistic at this stage, but it certainly achieves the level of detail achieved by cartoons, for example. And of course as graphics hardware improves, the sky really is the limit. CyberSwine supports hardware 3D acceleration straight out of the box, as well as an impressive amount of graphics customization.

At this stage you will be able to get your
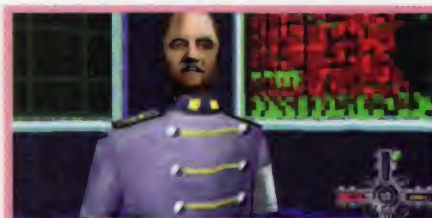
Ver nice 3D graphics, yes indeed, even more amazing is that it streams realtime from the net

hands on a copy either by purchasing the CD-ROM, or by purchasing it and downloading the software over the internet. CyberSwine will be bundled with Packard Bell NEC computers, also.

And believe it or not, all this was built by Australian companies, in Australia! (the crowd goes wild). It's great to see something of this obviously outstanding quality coming from our quietly achieving creative game developers.

Ed Dawson

CyberSwine: The Facts

CyberSwine was developed by Bondi-based Brilliant Digital Entertainment. It requires a P90 with 16Mb of RAM and a 4-speed CD ROM to run. Recommended is a P166 with 32Mb RAM. Direct3D is supported too.
www.bde3d.com
This is the official Brilliant Interactive Website. Look here for more info and news about upcoming releases.

Tex Murphy - Overseer

Category	Adventure
Players	1
Publisher	Access
Available	1st Qtr '98

Yup, Tex is back, minimalist acting style and all, in another high class cutting edge graphical adventure - and it's even got burnt out second rate actors in supporting roles too! Now that's what you want in a game! No, really, in all seriousness, the latest Tex Murphy adventure does seem really good, and looks like it's going to follow in the high class footsteps of the previous two in the series.

The formula doesn't seem to have changed all that much (which is probably a good thing if you liked the other two, like I did), it's still a tech-noir scenario, with Tex doing his deadpan best to be a mix of Philip Marlowe and Groucho Marx, and getting into all sorts of trouble over women (just like both of them). It doesn't fol-

If you look closely, you'll notice the figure above right is Michael York, flush from his success in Logans Run straight to a CD/DVD near you

low The Pandora Directive chronologically, but there is continuity. Apparently, the opening scenes will form the bridge between the two cases for Tex - starting shortly after the end of the Pandora case, with him opening up to Chelsee Bando and telling her about his past - including the Overseer case. You can probably expect a lovely ripple effect as the game segues in to Tex's past, and his first case as a private dick - the Overseer case. It begins soon after Tex embarks upon his career as a private detective, and is a classic 'one just man in a corrupt society' scenario. He quits his previous job when he discovers that his boss and mentor is a corrupt and

unethical investigator and goes it alone, confident that it will just be a matter of time before he hits the big time. After renting out an office and a couple of weeks of playing tiddlywinks with himself, it does start to happen - in much the same way that all detective-noir begins - a gorgeous fallen women walks in, she's just lost her father in what she alone thinks is suspicious circumstances (and of course she knows more, much more, than she initially tells Tex), and enlists Tex's help to solve the mystery. And so it begins.

Technically, Overseer is an advancement upon the Pandora Directive in the same way that

Pandora was an advancement upon UAKM - which was, incidentally, the first CD-Rom game I ever played, with my brand spanking top of the line 2 speed CD drive. I mention this because Overseer will be the first DVD game to be played on my system (though it will ship in two versions - one DVD or 5 CD's), and that in itself is something special. In terms of in game technologies as well, Overseer is pushing the envelope. The video is all in MPEG-2 form, recorded using blue screen technology, and the (almost) true 3D environments in 16 bit colour allow (almost) complete freedom of movement. Truth be told, games such as

these are often dodgy affairs. The technology is really at the forefront, and with (sort of) name actors taking part there is a real danger that words such as gameplay might be pushed to one side during the production process. However, the past two Tex Murphy adventures have been nothing short of fantastic, and indications are that Overseer will do nothing to change that. Also, some of the elements from Pandora and UAKM have been retained due to feedback from the players. Overseer will have two modes of play, one for some hard core puzzle solving and one for those that just want to get on with the story, and as with both previous Tex games their acclaimed intuitive hint system has been retained as well. Expect a full review as soon as we can - it's something I'm really looking forward to.   *G.J.*

Kick Off '98

Category	Football Sim
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Ubisoft
Available	1st QTR 98

This is a touch confusing. Ubisoft have another football game reviewed elsewhere in these pages, and it's pretty awful. Kick Off 98 looks anything but though, which leaves me wondering just what the hell's going on over at Ubisoft? Did they start World Football, then realise it was decidedly average but have to finish it anyway? Is KO 98 an attempt to redeem themselves to the gaming community?

Anyway, forget about the other game, KO 98 is very different to it and deserves our sole attention here. If the demo beta version we've had a look at is anything to go by, it's actually pretty different to every other football sim out there as

well. For starters, the viewing angle was unique in that it seemed to have the point of view of a camera positioned about 10 metres above the opposition's goal - and we realise how strange that sounds,

but it actually seems to work fairly well. There are a few problems seeing the ball when it's in the air, and locating team mates to pass to was a bit hard, but for the greater part it doesn't present a

problem. As to the gameplay, well, that seemed quite spiffy too. The pitch is nice and large, and the players are animated nicely which helps to create that oh-so-necessary feel of realism so sadly lacking in many other games of this nature. The control method seemed simple enough, but opinion will have to be reserved until we get our hands on a more advanced version of the game.

Football sim! Quality football sim! Life is good. Lovely motion captured figures and realistic gameplay, this may be one for fans of the world-game

From what we could tell however, a four button approach had been used, with two varieties of tackles (slide and block), (intuitive) passes, lobs, and shots. This might be a good one - we'll let you know.

Wizardry 8

Category	RPG
Players	1
Publisher	Sir-Tech
Available	2nd Qtr 1998

Believe it or not, but the Wizardry series has been around since the heady days of the Apple II, back in 1981. That makes it around 17 years since the Wizardry dynasty got going, and this latest instalment will be sure to get devotees of the series smiling once again.

The Wizardry series has sat firmly in the hard core RPG strata up until now, and it doesn't look as if anything is going to change. Statistics, depending upon your point of view, are either the backbone or the bane of RPG's, but Wizardry has gone for the classic 'backbone' approach - there's plenty of stats in Wizardry 8, and they're very visible too. Wizardry 8 is a classic RPG in other ways as well, you form a party of 6 characters from a variety of character classes (including all the usual Elves, Halflings, and so on as well as

quite a few others), and you're shown the world from a first person view (a'la the Bards Tale series). The graphics are very nicely done though, and while they don't feature the latest whizz-bang 3D effects they're still very serviceable for an RPG.

In terms of gameplay there are a couple of notable features for Wizardry, the first is their revamped personality system. In previous Wizardry games, per-

sonality was really only important when your characters were negotiating with NPC's - and even then it wasn't very important. Sir-Tech are saying that the new personality system "will make your characters come alive" by reacting and commenting upon the world around them. Also, rather than a standard turn based combat system, Wizardry 8 will employ a 'phased' system, which means that factors such as initiative, character position, agility and so on will be taken into account. It doesn't look like a paradigm leap for RPG's, but it does look like a very pretty, very playable, and very comprehensive continuation of the RPG standard.
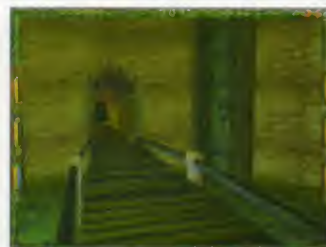
17 years on, the Wizardry series is still going strong, and still plenty of nerdy style fun
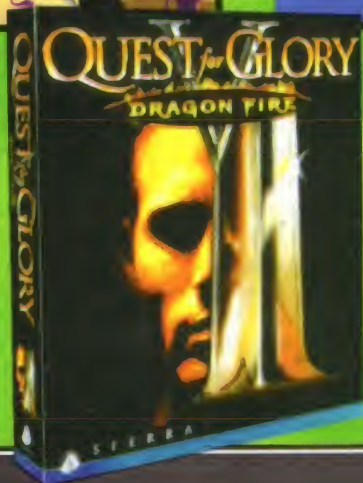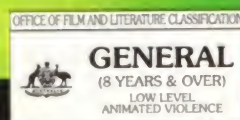
Stealth Reaper 2020

Category	Flight Sim
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	GT Interactive
Available	Jan/Feb

Talk to any self-respecting computer nerd, and chances are that they will remember fondly their Commodore 64, and wonderfully fantastic titles like Elite, Way of the Exploding Fist, Sentinel and plenty of others. One C64 game that remains firmly etched in my brain as a classic childhood memory was F-19 Stealth Fighter. It had it all, fantastic visuals, great gameplay and missions to die for. I'm mentioning this because from Stealth Reaper 2020 brought those memories flooding back, and not just because of the title, but because the gameplay looks strangely familiar....

In the near future, the UN is but a shadow of its former self, and conflicts worldwide have accounted for around 15 million deaths in around 20 years. So it's a time for vigilantes...sort of. It doesn't seem right to call politicians, intelligence agents, and high level military officers 'vigilantes', but essentially that's what they are, and what they're trying to do is enforce peace (by eradicating anyone and anything that doesn't agree with them, apparently). To help them in their efforts, they've created their own new toy of death, called the Stealth Reaper, and like the stealth fighter of the present it's got some really cool features, like experimental sensor systems, and 'invisible' defense technology, and most importantly a really cool and sleek design. Obviously, you're the pilot of the craft, and your task is to fly around and blow things up a lot.

That's what you want in a flight-sim. A cockpit that takes up half your screen. Great! The use of the bright lime green could be a tad distracting too

SR2020 isn't going to be a hard core flight-sim however, the controls are going to be fairly simple, and the main thrust of the game is going to be in the areas of combat. The Reaper Plane isn't purely created from imagination though, it's actually modelled on the 'JSF' program, which is the USA's next generation Stealth Fighter, scheduled to be operational sometime around the start of the 21st century, and the game itself has been created by a company that also creates military sims for a living. Cool, eh? Something to look forward to for sure.

Test Drive 4

Category	Arcade driving sim
Players	1-4
Publisher	Accolade
Available	Jan/Feb

I'm no great racing game freak, but being able to take on the persona of the lads from id software (and their appreciation on very fast and ludicrously expensive automobiles) mixed with the criminal tendencies of Snake (the crim from the Simpsons) sounds like a pretty good premise for a game to me. Even so, Test Drive 4 doesn't look to be a fantastic game, which is a bit of a pity because it could be great fun.

It's not terrible though, don't get me wrong, for the first couple of minutes I was having a great time hooting and hollering as I took out innocent drivers and evaded the police in my Jag XJ 220 at 200 miles an hour, but after a while the experience palled a little. Accolade are yet to put the final touches on the game though, so maybe they'll enhance the gameplay outa sight - but I doubt it. What have you got in there so far? Well, there's 6 tracks to race on, including the narrow country roads of Cheswick in England, the hilly district and freeways of San Francisco, Bern in Switzerland, Kyoto in Japan, and Washington D.C.. And as to car selection, there is a decent number to choose from, with 5 modern super cars, and 5 muscle cars with a run down on what's under the hood for each.

But it's the car physics that tends to let TD4 down. Accolade are boasting that there's an "accurate recreation of each vehicle's unique performance characteristics" but I couldn't discern much of a difference (though in fairness, this may be

Initially quite exciting (see San Fransisco hill jump at top), indications are that there isn't much long term value

yet to be added). Also, crashing into the side of a mountain at 300km/h merely results in your car bouncing off and continuing merrily along - which often is quicker than actually braking for a corner. It seems like a 'fun for a couple of minutes' game that degenerates into a fairly boring affair, but final judgement has been reserved until the final release.

Grand Prix Legends

The magic of the 1967 season will give us F1 action with a much needed dose of fun

Category	Racing Sim
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Sierra
Available	1st Qtr '98

Ahh, the good old days of racing. Days when fans could expect more than commentators endlessly dribbling on about nothing in particular to fill in 'dead air', days when drivers were more than just corporate logos to be owned, controlled, and dispensed with once past their use-by date, days when safety was a dirty word, days when Schumacher wasn't around to deliberately drive into anyone that threatened him on the points table, and days when fans could expect fatalities at almost every race. Yep, they were the good old days, and now Sierra are bringing them into the present on your computer screens in Grand Prix Legends, and indications are that this could be one hell of a racing sim.

For starters, it's from Papyrus, creators of the eminently playable IndyCar Racing (and IndyCar Racing 2), who have been swallowed by Sierra in the interim, but are obviously still being allowed to create quality racing sims. GPL is based upon the same engine as ICR, though it has been updated to take advantage of the latest technology - including native support for 3Dfx cards. Yep, Sierra have finally seen the light, and have stopped releasing games that only ever have support for the Rendition (because of Sierra's Rendition-based card).

A release is expected sometime around April, and though there isn't all that much information available at the moment on GPL, there will definitely be a cockpit viewing mode, and the viewpoint will apparently be adjustable, so you can look to your left, right, or behind (a'la Interstate '76). You'll also get all the actual teams and drivers form the 1967 season, and a high degree of freedom of movement (i.e. Overshoot a corner and you'll find yourself driving through a cornfield). More info as soon as possible.

Formula 1 Racing Simulation

Category	Racing
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Ubisoft
Available	Jan/Feb

We've been lucky enough to have been supplied with progressively better betas for this game over the last few months. It's been a treat to watch Formula 1 Racing Simulation come along, though slightly saddening to see that with each new version Ubisoft have stuck with the same weird name.

The most obvious positive F1RS boasts is how damn pretty it looks. There's a 3Dfx Glide version as well as a Direct 3D version planned at this stage. We particularly appreciated the design of the cockpit itself, which was both unobstrusive yet authentic and featured that elusive imposiibility for MicroProses GP2 - wheels!

The game is fully sanctioned by FOA/FOCA, which means REAL NAMES! Fantastic! It also means you'll get the full suite of 16 tracks. This authenticity is great for an F1 game. F1RS is based on the 1996 season, which means you'll be seeing a whole lot more of Damon up on the front row than you may be comfortable with.

Another important aspect essential to a successful F1 (or any racing game for that matter) game is the convincing opponent AI. These computer drivers actually seem to be aware of the players existence! An amazing and rare thing in a world of racing games where all opponents drive their own racing line oblivious to all around them.

F1RS doesn't appear to be designed as a hard-core sim. The driving model is a pleasant blend of arcade and sim. This may change a little in the full version (especially if Ubisoft heed our pleas for greater realism).

Full review next issue.

Fast & beautiful F1. No genre gains more from 3D acceleration

Ultimate Race Pro

Category	Driving
Players	1-16
Publisher	Kalisto
Available	Feb

Until now, only owners of 3D accelerators based on NEC's PowerVR chip have savoured the delights of Ulimate Race. It's been bundled free with all cards since the PowerVR first appeared. Ultimate Race though, is no cheap 'n' suspicious pack-in freebie, no sir, this game is a masterpiece of 3D graphics and is a hell of a nice drive.

The game's evolution has been a strange one. The original version which came with the abortive PowerVR1 had but one track. But what a track! It took several minutes to lap it and was, at the time of it's release, the finest looking game ever seen on a PC. Next up was the Ultimate Race which turned up in boxes containing the new PowerVR2 card. It had 3 tracks this time! The one, huge, original track - cut in half... Bit lame that, we thought. The new track was nice though, winding roads through a farm. Like Fields of Dreams, except a motor racing circuit.

Now, finally, somebody has had a quiet word and Kalisto are about to realise the potential of their driving gem. Ultimate Race Pro it'll be called, and it should be on the shelves by February 1998 for almost all platforms.

Besides enhanced support for the PowerVR (like 1024 x 768 smooth on a 200MMX!), the Pro version has Glide support for the 3Dfx, Direct 3D for all the rest of

you and a straight, software mode.

So what's to be excited about? Pretty graphics for one. The sun slowly rises and falls with appropriate REAL TIME changes to the lighting. A full day and night will pass in about 10 minutes and you can just find somewhere nice to park and soak it all up. The driving bit involves clunky 4-speed V8 thunderbeasts. Handbraking is essential for the sharper corners. Blasting through the tollgates at 250mph after crossing the Golden Gate bridge through a misty dawn is a special gaming experience.

We've been thrashing the beta version hard for a couple of weeks now. By golly it's nice. The driving model isn't quite GP2, but neither is it the arcade nonsense that would've ruined it all.

Full review next issue!

Jaw dropping graphics and scenery, excellent car physics - and now a decent selection of tracks. A very sexy game gets even more attractive!

Myth: The Fallen Lords is the first fully 3D realtime strategy game,
where epic battle rages across a richly detailed fantasy world. A multimetric game,
Myth: The Fallen Lords gives gamers complete freedom to view their forces and the battlefield,
orbiting around their heads or zooming in for a close-up of a melee. Mastery of formations and
disciplined movement of hundreds of units is critical to survival, where large scale

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Wartorn

Category	RTS
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Eyst
Available	2nd Quarter '98

There's literally hundreds of RTS style games out there, and the time is fast approaching when gamers are going to become over-saturated and get totally sick of the genre. Hopefully there will still be enough gamers with an interest left by the time Wartorn comes out, because it's one that looks as thought it might be worth shaking off your cynicism for. It's from the same team that made the eminently playable and wonderfully perverse DogDay (but they've changed their name from Asylum to Eyst in the interim), they're still based in beautiful scenic Woy Woy, work is underway on the sequel to DogDay ('DogDay II - Chegga's revenge') and they're about to pump out another quality game in the form of Wartorn.

It's set in the future, at a time when war has been deemed unnecessary - but still makes for a great spectator sport. Think of Desert Storm in the year 2207, proudly brought to you by CNN and the General Electric Warhead Division ("When you really want to hurt someone, use a GE product! We've been proud merchants of death for over 300 years"). Anyway, war no longer occurs in the way we think of it now, instead regular tournaments are staged on local, regional, divisional, and international levels - and needless to say, only the best survive. The governments are happy with the situation, because it's a great way of maintaining nationalistic fervour, and helps to keep burgeoning population levels down too. Sort of a 'survival of the most cold blooded killers', if you will.

It's still early days yet, but from what we've seen thus far, the engine for Wartorn does look pretty special. 3D support is definite, and Eyst will be making use of their proprietary engine, called ETTE (Eyst Three-d Tactics Engine). It's pretty cool really, what it means is that you can move the viewpoint around to any position you want, including zooming in and out. So a nifty scenario would be that you've got a couple of battles going on in different sectors, and you scroll around the first battle, zoom in and take a look at how things are going, make a few adjustments and then scroll out and over to the other battle to see how things are going there. How cool is that?

In terms of actual gameplay, it's really too soon to tell. We've seen a demo (the main programmer guy, Ben, was nice enough to drop by and show us his new toy), and it looked pretty spectacular, but we're eagerly awaiting a playable demo so we can let you know what it's like to play. But it did look good, made wonderful use of the advantages of 3d acceleration, and had all the necessary elements like base creation and maintenance and heaps of cool units. From Woy Woy to the world!

As cool as these screenshots are, it's still early days in Wartorn's life - it's gonna look even better!

Jagged Alliance 2

Category	Turn based strategy
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Sir-Tech
Available	Soon

No, you haven't been caught in a time warp - this is a new game. The sequel to the original Jagged Alliance wasn't actually a sequel, you see. Jagged Alliance: Deadly Games wasn't 'Jag2' per se. Sir-Tech explains thusly; "Deadly Games...used the same basic graphics and interface as the original Jagged Alliance. The game we're working on now has so much new stuff in that it really is the second generation of Jagged Alliance. Hence Jagged Alliance 2.". Well, there you go, eh? Anyway, it's the third game in the Jagged Alliance family, and from what we've seen so far Jag2 will blow the previous two out of the water in terms of both graphics and gameplay - and considering just how good the gameplay was in both Jag and Jag:DG, that's pretty awesome indeed.

Though both Jag and Jag:DG were great games, the graphics engine used was more than a little dated. With Jag2, finally we're going to be looking at hi-res, hi-colour graphics - with dynamic lighting for both night and day missions too. Yep, that's right - night missions. Instead of

Jag2 is taking an isometric perspective a'la the Ultima series, except you're in control of a bunch of bloodthirsty mercs armed to the teeth. Cool!

having to stop fighting at the end of each day, you will be able to work your troops for the full 24 hour day, 7 days a week. Naturally, the longer your mercs go without rest, the more tired they will get, and the less time they will have to recover from their wounds - and the unhappier they will get with you too. Also, the terrain will be multi-levelled rather than the flat land as with previous versions, with an isometric rather than a straight top-down perspective used. Along with this each object will be mapped in 3d, so you're going to have

to pick your spots for cover this time around. Hiding behind a bush while a bad guy sprays you with an AK-47 won't work anymore, the bullets will (finally) just go straight through and fill you full of lead. The AI used in the game has also been completely revamped and upgraded (and it was actually very good already), and also you'll be able to play in real time if the turn-based system isn't to your liking, a'la X-Com Apocalpyse.

All the cool characters from the previous Jag games will be retained (along with Ivan, who will actually speak a little English this time around), as well as quite a few new mercs, and Micky the bastard arms dealer will also be there...unfortunately. Gameplay will involve the same kind of scenario as the original Jag, with a large map divided into sectors - but this time along with the usual baddie mercs, you're going to be up against some very weird adversaries, maybe even aliens (Sir-tech are being very tight mouthed about what they are exactly). It's a top quality title we're sweating on, and we can't wait to hear Tex tell us that if he dies "the boots stay on!" again. Classic.

State-of-the-art first person squad based science fiction combat simulation.

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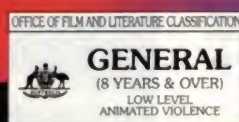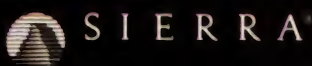
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Deathtrap Dungeon

Category	Action/adventure
Players	1-2
Publisher	Eidos Interactive
Available	Jan

Cute chick in shiny pants, with sword & pigs, some flying

Back in the 80's fun was locking yourself in your room for the entire school holidays armed only with two six sided dice and Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks. Fellow nerdy old timers will recall these teenage flights of fancy, that were an addictive mix of Dungeons & Dragons and Choose your Own Adventure books. Deathtrap Dungeon was arguably the best of the Fighting Fantasy series, and Eidos have been busier than Orcs at an Elven barbecue producing a spiffy looking computer version of this classic.

The beta version we received is looking mighty promising

indeed. Sporting a very Tomb Raider like graphics engine, the emphasis is on limbs being hacked off, spurting blood and some mean looking sword play. While collecting various magical and non-magical swords is of no great surprise, getting hold of an 18th century musket and shooting buckshot into some skeletons is definitely taking fantasy themes to a new level. Another novel feature is having the choice of playing THE definition of a barbarian guy or the very deadly looking female warrior. Lara Croft move over, this babe of mayhem dressed in black leather inflicts carnage on a level that even Conan would find hard matching.

Over 50 monster types are promised. All of the classic

D&D types seem present including your undead and goblin type critters. Some of the unusual types we saw included the bondage monster, who had a liking for whips and deadly looking clowns that had a very unnerving "Circus of the Damned" laugh. Looks like a game not to be played solo in a darkened room. Monster hacking is one thing, but human slicing and dicing will also be showcased through deathmatch play. Amputating a friend's arm with a two handed broadsword might just become a PowerPlay sanctioned activity, time will tell.

With 3D accelerator support, sprawling levels and the heritage of Tomb Raider behind it Death Trap Dungeon is shaping up as a subterranean action/adventure game of potentially epic proportions. We're looking forward to heading underground and reviewing the full version in the not too distant future.

(above & right) development polygon work for some of the monsters of the game (note legs protruding from mouth)

BOGGLE

Category	Board game
Players	1-4
Publisher	Hasbro
Available	December

Ahh, remember those long torturous holiday afternoons with nothing to do except make good your obligation to spending 'quality time' with the rellies? Well, Hasbro are releasing their stock of bored games as computer games. Yay! So you've got these dice with letters on them and you have to make words out of them. But the point of Boggle was that you made these words in secret, and then compared them once time was up, which is kind of hard to do on one computer screen, and is going to involve a lot of seat changing and eye covering - and probably quite a few screaming tantrums from aggrieved family members. Just like the real thing.

HARDBALL 6

Category	Baseball sim
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Accolade
Available	First Quarter 1998

It was the best baseball sim on the C64 by a long, long way, and though subsequent updates haven't set the world afire, Hardball 6 looks as if it might arrest that slide a little. This time, Accolade have gone for a true 3d stadium and fully 3d figures, which allows for unlimited camera angles and supposedly more realistic gameplay. It's fully licensed by all the necessary baseball corporations, and along with the actual gameplay there will also be a complete management section, for buying, selling and trading of players, draft picks, and so on. If it ends up as good as it sounds, Hardball will be one for baseball fans to watch out for.

GOLF PRO

Category	Golf sim
Players	1-4
Publisher	Empire
Available	Feb

A golf game. Another golf game. What can I say? It's got the usual stuff - golf courses, clubs, balls, stupid clothes, and photo-realistic scenery. So what's new? Well, it's not new, but the swinging method is new-ish. They've gone with a true swing thing, which means how hard and where you hit the ball is controlled by where you move the mouse. It sounds like a good idea, but in the preview version we were sent it was pretty hard to manage. When we get a proper version, we'll be able to tell you if it works well - and it does have the potential to do so.

MAX PAYNE

Category	First person shooter
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	3D Realms
Available	Mid 1998

3D Realms have another 3d action shooter in the works, this one in conjunction with Remedy

Entertainment (creators of the very cool 'Death Rally'). And sincerely, Max Payne looks like it's going to be a pretty shit-hot release. The storyline (yes, there will be a strong storyline) runs that you're a New York cop, framed for the murder of your boss, and have to avoid both police officers and the real bad guys in your task to find the real killer and clear your name. It looks great too, with native 3d support, and a completely separate engine that just about rivals the much vaunted Prey engine, and will follow on from Duke Nukem in the 'interactive environment' stakes. Cool eh?

OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Category	Weird adventure thingy
Players	1
Publisher	Interplay
Available	Jan/Feb

Ok, so the world is about to end. Prophecy from ages ago says that every thousand years some gate opens and through the gap between dreams and waking pour all these nasty surreal creature things, who plan to end the world. You have to stop them by melding little coloured balls together to match the colour of some apparitions - or at least you do in the demo we received.

It doesn't seem to make much sense, but it does look very pretty. Sort of an Omni 3d engine has been used, and the set designs look absolutely fabbo. As to the gameplay, it looks like one of those 'if it's the kind of thing you like, you'll love it' games.

10TH PLANET

Category	Space combat/strategy sim
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Bethesda Softworks
Available	Mid '98

Bethesda have cultivated a name for themselves as one of the pre-eminent role playing software houses thanks largely to the titles in the Elder Scrolls series - but that's not all they can do, not by a long shot. 10th Planet looks like a top shelf space combat and strategy sim, sort of a cross between Elite, Wing Commander, and BC3K. The graphics look fantastic, and apparently will all be in hi-res 3d - which will be quite a feat considering how large the map area is purported to be. It's going to be an 'Earth v the Space Aliens' type scenario, where you are put in charge of the Earth fleet both on a macro and micro level, depending upon what's happening at the time.

VIRUS

HOW WELL DO YOU YOU KNOW YOUR SYSTEM?

- Virus is different on every computer system it is played on - Your data determines the look & feel of the game
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TOCA Touring Car Championship

This is it. This is the one. This is the racing sim you've been dreaming of. It's real, yet it's still more fun than hard. Amazing.

BEST engine noise EVER!

Lights reflect off the wet road and we shed tears of joy. Magic

The innovative, true 3D, cockpit is a treat, though the seemingly accentuated body roll can get a little weird

N ever heard of this one before, have you? It just sort of slipped quietly into the office one day in that timidly unassuming way common to unheralded games. Ben had told me it was pretty good, but I was sceptical as I placed the CD (and dongle - the arcane copy protection device needed for this "review copy") into my computer. That the developers were small-time Brit outfit Codemasters, best known for their cool console racer, Micro Machines, than anything on the PC, did little to ease my concern. I tentatively clicked on "Run" and...

Um...

Incredibly amazing

No, I can't do it. I can't keep up this pretence. I know you've already peeked at the score across the page. I know you want to know just how damn good this game is. Let me ask you then, which is the best racing game of the year? Forget Moto Racer (motorbikes, who really cares?). Forget Carmageddon (a humourless novelty). Forget

NASCAR 2 and CART (too anal and too hard). Forget Interstate 76 (moustaches have never been cool). Forget Daytona (no really, just forget Daytona). Think, instead, of TOCA Touring Car Championship (or TOCA for short). This is the best racing game of the year. It's absolutely, amazingly, incredibly, bloody

fantastic. And from Codemasters, too! Christ! You can quote me on that.

TOCA is so real it will leave skidmarks on your monitor. The driving model is near faultless, but that's only part of the story. What immediately endeared me to this game were all the incidental details. You know, those small,

but cool touches that keep surprising you every time you play. The new things you notice each race which make you grin and say, "Hey! My name's written on the rear window of my car!", or something. This'll happen when you first see the working brake lights on your opponents' and your own car. It'll happen when on one lap you knock over some track-side witches hats and see them scattered across the road next lap. You'll smile, too, when you compete in your first wet race and see the great rain effects and - even better - the dynamic reflections from each car's headlights on the glistening track. Then there's the aeroplane that circles overhead at

quite a low-altitude throughout a race at Donnington (an expensive way to see the action I would have thought!). And, yes, you really do get to see your name across the top of your rear window.

Real speed

Prising my attention away from all this, I started to take great interest in some of the other features. Like the graphics, natch. While the scenery and tracks are impressive, TOCA's official license means that each track is essentially some strips of grey and green with a few advertising hoardings adding a dash of colour. Speed, then, is the most important factor here - and this is an area in which TOCA succeeds effortlessly. Of course, it does support all kinds of 3D acceleration, so would you expect anything less? We've reached the stage, I think it's safe to say, where you'd be mad to buy any
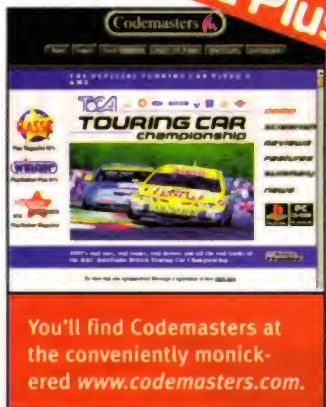
The driving style is full-on bump and shove, which, as purists would appreciate, is exactly how it is for this Formula in reality

kind of 3D game unless you own a 3D card.

Better still, the cars themselves look sensational. Subtle movements, a twitch here or a slight rocking there, as the car reacts properly to contact with the track and fellow competitors, bring an extraordinary realism to the action. It's kind of hard to describe, but there is a genuine solidity and weight to all the vehicles. They look like cars, instead of an amalgam of polygons. Probably the reason for this is the accuracy of the handling. Ahead of everything else this is why TOCA is right up there with the likes of Grand Prix 2. The driving model, as I mentioned earlier, is almost perfect. Completing consecutive laps of any track - espe-

cially at a competitive speed - is difficult, but it simply feels right. It feels just how it should be. And that is the reason why everyone can (and should) play this game. If I can make a comparison with X-Car (the other driving game I reviewed this month), I would say that, in TOCA, you know that you're on the racing line because you can actually sense the "pull", the downforce or whatever it's called. In X-Car it's like the game is pushing you around, as if you don't quite have complete control. As I said, TOCA just feels right.

On top of all that, the very nature of touring car racing makes for a brilliant gaming experience. This is real knockabout racing, muscling your way past, sideswiping and using opponents as braking assistants. The AI is great too. Every car in the race is just as ruthlessly competitive as you are, and they make mistakes as well (probably not as many as you, however).

Real racing

Completing the package is the superbly polished presentation. Codemasters have made a smart effort to ensure that each race is treated like an event. The commentary and use of cool and unusual camera angles before and after practice sessions, qualifying, and the race itself adds an incalculable amount to the atmosphere. There are single race, championship, and multiplayer (network and split-screen) options, as well as all the official cars from the British touring car season. My only complaint concerns the somewhat "arcade" style of the championship mode. You have to collect a certain number of points to progress to the next race, and you cannot race or practice on any track that you haven't reached (or "unlocked") during the season. This disappointed me, but it's hardly a major flaw.

Ben said this might possibly be his favourite racing game ever. I can't yet find it in me to separate GP2 from that accolade, so TOCA will have to settle for the following. This is the second best racing game ever.

David Wildgoose

PC PowerPlay GOLD 94%	
Category	Racing
Players	1-8
Publisher	Codemasters
Price	$TBA
Rating	G
Available	Now
For	Oh God, everything! All that a sim should be, plus everything a game needs.
Against	The arcade style race structure is a minor personal gripe.
Need	P100 (with 3D card)/P166 (no 3D card), 16Mb RAM, 4xCD
Want	P166 (with 3D card obviously)

3D SUPPORTS MOST 3D CARDS, DIRECTX5.0 AND MMX

FIFA 98 - Road to the World Cup

Fifa 98 bounces back with all that is good and right about soccer sims. It also restores the honour and integrity lost after the disaster that was Fifa 97. It looks nice too...

I know what you're probably thinking - you're thinking that Fifa 97 sucked and sucked hard, and you're thinking that Fifa 96 wasn't that great either. You're thinking 'why should I bother with Fifa 98, cos it'll probably be a complete dog too?'.

Well, you're thinking the wrong thing. You should be thinking 'where can I get my hands on a copy of this game, like, right now?' - because Fifa 98 is the best football sim ever, by a long way. Gameplay that's almost as good as the real thing, players animated so well you'll think you're watching TV, a huge variety of moves available, enough options to ensure that you're playing at your level, as well as enhancing the long term viability of the game, and commentary that makes mostly makes sense (save for the excremental Andy Gray).

Truth be told, that isn't all that much of an audacious statement because there haven't been all that many decent football sims. Oh sure, some of them looked the part, and some had some really lovely motion capture, and one has even made use of the 3Dfx card, but none have quite managed to capture the essence of football. It might be fun in the short term to run from one end of the pitch to the other with one of your fluently animated play-

ers, and it's nice to indulge in your fantasy of beating [insert hated team here] by 13 goals to nil, but there hasn't been a game that makes you play *as if you were playing football* rather than a computer game which required you to press buttons at the correct intervals. It's a very important aspect of any football game for me, possibly *the* most important, and while I'm still awaiting a truly realistic simulation of a football game, Fifa 98 does come fairly close in many ways.

Offensive defenders

Fifa 98 isn't perfect, there are a number of areas that still require substantial improvement, but in terms of gameplay it is definitely head and shoulders above all the others. One of the biggest areas of improvement over Fifa 97 (and plenty of others in the genre) was in the movement off the ball by both the opposition and my computer controlled teammates. While I was holding the ball just outside the opposition's box, trying to figure a way through, my players were making darting little runs into the box, out wide, and generally trying to make space for themselves, putting themselves into a better position. It was great, just like the real thing. In defense too, my teammates would try and either stay in their zone or mark opposition players as they made

their runs. Fantastic! And, one would think, a programming breakthrough considering just how averagely this has been handled in the past. There's still room for improvement, I don't think it's perfect, but still this is still streets ahead of the competition. On the other hand, for some reason when a free kick is given, instead of moving to a decent position, players can tend to become a little erratic - especially the forwards who for some reason decide that they've always really wanted to be defenders and move into their new positions and resolutely stay there no matter what I try and make them do. Also, going for a long clearance (either human or computer teams) often results in an offside decision, no matter where you've placed your forwards. Sure, long balls upfield sometimes do result in the forwards becoming a little over-eager and falling into an offside position, but still, this happens much too often in Fifa 98.

Astounding detail

But enough whingeing. These are fairly small problem areas, and far outweighed by the positive points. For starters, we're talking about the best motion capture ever, both software and 3Dfx versions (and both look bloody great, though the 3Dfx version is better, of course), and animation levels so high that it's almost comparable to TV (or

best motion capture EVER!

Viduka

Goalscorer

Yep, the replay feature has been retained - as well as the ability to save highlights and replay them later

Auto Replay

As most South American commentators would say; "Goooooooooooooooooooo oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo alllllll!!!"

Auto Replay

Goals   02   70 mins

customize squad

final round

team management

actually better, if your SBS reception is as bad as mine). The detail is really quite astounding, players have plenty of ball skills, and they're not reticent about showing them off either. Body swerves, diving headers, trick turns, volleys, pretty much anything that can be done on a soccer pitch is done, and done spectacularly.

This isn't just Fifa 98 either, it's 'Fifa 98 - Road to the World Cup', and though the usual options for play are in place (friendly, training, league, and so on), the main thrust of the game is focused upon qualification and the World Cup itself. Any team from the major footballing nations of the world can be played, either for a one off friendly or the entire league. If you choose to take the road to the World Cup though, you'll be able to choose from any of the national teams - including those with... only an outside chance, like New Zealand, Cambodia, Azerbaijan, Aruba and so on. Being a patriotic kinda person, after an initial practice session I took control of the Australian team in their bid to qualify and then maybe even go through the first stage of the World Cup itself. All the players

(top right) Bizarre victory dances included... (above) 'customizing the squad' - really all you can do is add 4 reserves (below) adding some realism...

were there, although the inclusion of players like Paul Wade and Bove tended to date the data just a little. Still, most of the current Australian team was there, and the stats seemed to be pretty close to real life. The initial qualification was a bit of a cakewalk, because as with the real thing, Australia was taking on such giants of the football world as the Cook Islands, PNG, Fiji and the like. At first (and only because I was just getting used to the game, honest) I set the difficulty to amateur, and allowed the computer to help me with shot target-

ing, crosses, and heading. This isn't recommended at all - the gameplay is eerily reminiscent of Fifa 97: Slow, boring and painfully easy. However, once you up the difficulty a bit (there are three general modes of play; Amateur, Professional, and World Class) and maybe take off some CPU help for things like headers and shot targeting, the game becomes an entirely different experience. For starters the higher the skill level selected the faster play is, and at the ultimate difficulty level playing as Brazil is no guarantee of a win, even against the crappest side in the world. Essentially what this means is that there are enough options difficulty-wise to ensure that this is one that will remain on the hard drive for a long time. And as a footnote, Australia did qualify, but they didn't make it past the first round of the World Cup - now how's that for realistic?

62:37 Mexico 4 Australia 1

Honestly jaw dropping

Overall, Fifa 98 is a classic in the football sim genre. EA's in-house production team have completely reversed the downward trend of the Fifa series, and a new benchmark has been set. The actual gameplay is superb, and feels very much like the real thing (with a couple of exceptions), and the graphics and motion capture are honestly jaw dropping. On the negative side though, while the screens for team selection, formation, and so on are very pretty, I would

+ Plus

have preferred a little more functionality. Other than that, the inclusion of a high degree of versatility for player statistics is a welcome and well done addition. You have ability to mess with each players stats, though you can't just max them out, instead you have a set number of points to allocate (depending upon the overall skill of the player), which can be swapped around such things as shot power, speed, agility, and so on. Also, each players aggression level can be set (varying from 'calm' to 'nutter'), as well as all the usual team formations and tactics. Fifa 98 - RTWC is a quality release, a definite must-have for any football fan, or any fan of quality computer games. Simply put, it rocks!

Gareth Jones
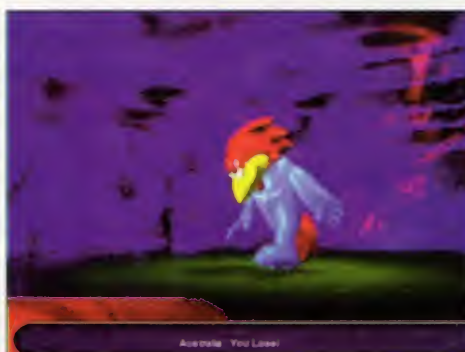
(above) The real test of a game - turn off all the graphics options and see if the gameplay carries it through. FIFA 98 does, in spades

PC PowerPlay PLATINUM AWARD 95%

Category	Football Sim
Players	1-4 (same) 2-20 (net) 2-8 (modem)
Publisher	EA Sports
Price	$89.95
Rating	G
Available	Now

For Incredibly good graphics, brilliant motion capture, huge variety of manoeuvres possible, and excellent gameplay to top it all off. The best football sim ever by a wide margin.

Against Andy Gray. The team management screens are very pretty, but they're not really all that functional - could have been much better. Andy Gray. Also, computer intelligence is good, but still room for improvement. Andy Gray.

Need P100, 16Mb RAM, 4XCD, Win 95

Want P166, 100Mb HDD, 8XCD, gamepad, 3Dfx card.

3D 3DFX GLIDE

MYTH: The Fallen Lords

Resource management be damned! War is why we play and war is what we want, here's some.
A lot actually.

Choke points like this, high ground & ambushes all make for classic wargaming without the bother of resource management

In hindsight, my life would have been better of late if Myth had turned out to be a crap game. I would not have slipped into nocturnal gamer mode for days on end. My waking hours could have done without people telling me how awful I looked from lack of sleep. Then there was that horror moment of realization that only comes when you have eaten pizza and garlic bread for the fourth day in a row. If you have even the slightest liking for fantasy wargames you best purchase a VERY comfortable computer chair. It will be required.

You don't construct a single building in Myth, and there is no resource management. This game is 100% battle tactics and appeals to your younger days of playing with toy soldiers, only in a much more advanced way. The background is medieval man vs. the lord of darkness and his very unfriendly minions. Each successful mission will advance the story of humankind's struggle with the forces of evil, and with limited men on each scenario, it's tough going.

Real world physics

The world of Myth is like a rendered fairy tale wilderness. Ruined castles, rolling hills, cobblestone roads and bleak looking swamps all set the scene. You can rotate and view the area from any angle you wish, heavily reinforcing the fact that this is a true 3D world on offer. The environment also affects the combat. Swamps will slow down marching units, flaming weapons will fizz out in water and taking the high ground becomes just as important as in those old war movies we watch on a Sunday afternoon. Real world physics are well and truly in place, often painfully so: Two dwarves are halfway up an incline, with a beastie at the top. Throwing the old Molotov Cocktail sees it hit the slope, roll

back down blowing the hapless little fellows into lots of little red bits. Not the most admirable way to fall in battle.

Molotov Cocktail hurling dwarves are only one of the mainstays of your fighting forces. There are the knights acting as your basic hand to hand guys. Archers equipped with longbows looking fantastic as their arrows sail through the air hopefully thudding into your enemy. Bezerkers ala Mel Gibson complete with Celtic warpaint, healers and the incredibly strong forest giants. What about playing the role of the bad guys I hear you ask? Well the legions of undead are off limits in the single player 25 mission campaign. You get access to them in multi-player mode, and they are a nasty lot consisting of giant spiders and exploding ghouls to name a couple.

Steal the Bacon

Expecting just straight deathmatch environment with multi-play, I was surprised by the amount of different styles on offer. King of the Hill is based around a time limit, last army in control of the flag wins the match. Other games involve capturing hidden balls around the battlefield, taking and holding various territories on the map

"I'll wade knee deep in the blood of my enemies" takes a realistic meaning in Myst. All the blood and gore remains on the field, you see
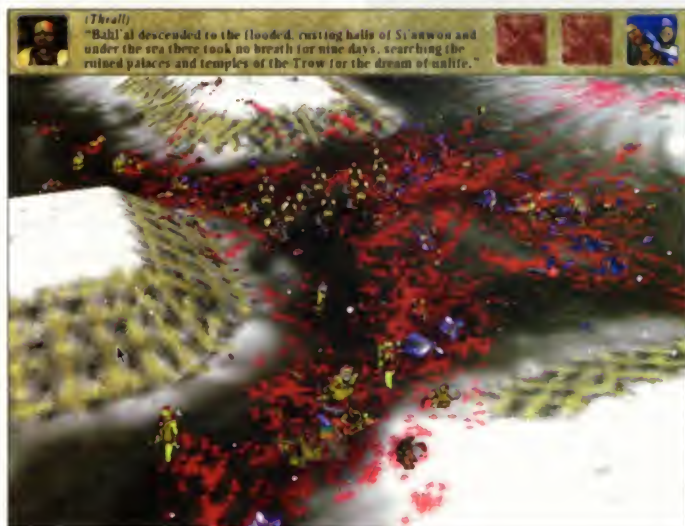
and so on. The most popular game is Steal the Bacon. A ball in the center of the map must be taken and held onto for the duration of the match. It's tricky as it can be kicked around like a slow moving soccerball, so you really don't want to roll it down a hill into the enemy encampment. Your opponent will laugh at you, this is a bad thing.

All of this fun is courtesy of Bungee.net, a very similar system to Diablo's Battlenet. There is even a player ranking system, injecting a bit of a serious competitive element. For further posterity, all your matches can be saved to a film and watched later on. For really stunning victories, post them onto the Internet and hopefully became famous for your military genius in taking the "Hill of Death" with just one wounded knight and a half drunken dwarf.

Myth does have a soft underbelly in a few areas. While varying degrees of zoom are available, even the outermost view seems a bit cramped. You get accustomed to it, but a wider view of the battle would have been nice. On the issue of controls, they aren't easy at first. You must get comfortable with using the mouse and keyboard in some fairly arcane ways. The worst being a pretty atrocious method of unit facing, involving a sliding and clicking mouse action that belongs in a deep abyss with other equally bad ideas.

Yes there are problems, but Myth comes through as a winner. The more you play, the deeper the game gets. What starts as a simple idea of just moving your men from point A to point B, develops into using cover, terrain and formations to great effect. This one is going to be a classic.

Pete Sharpe

PC PowerPlay

GOLD 93%

Category	Real time warfare
Players	1-16 TCP/IP (No modem or IPX LAN)
Publisher	Bungie
Price	TBA
Rating	TBA
Available	Now

For	The feeling of being part of the battlefield is fully conveyed. Team and Co-op multi-player options are very well implemented. Blood and gore on the field of battle really gives an edge.
Against	Steep learning curve with controls. The single player missions can be puzzley and too hard at times, even on easy setting.
Need	P100, 16Mb RAM, WIN95.
Want	P166, 32Mb RAM, 3DFX Card.

MYTH IS NATIVE VOODOO AND VOODOO RUSH SUPPORT THROUGH GLIDE

3D

TUROK DINOSAUR HUNTER

You, Are Tu-Rok! Sharpen up your stone-knives for a trip through this intense 3D adventure. The Groundbreaking N64 title finally arrives for the PC.

"**B**bbrrlaaaaarghHhh!"(choke, gurgle, thrash) shouts the 2-ton bipedal Dinosaur as your cut its throat out in a single vicious chop. It convulsively kicks and spasms, hissing noisily and spraying a wide gout of digital blood across the neatly rendered sedimentary rock, before collapsing with an earth-shaking rumble. You survey the carnage with a steely gaze, stalking onward and unshackling your AK-47 for the rapidly approaching armoured soldiers. "Fools!" you murmur ,as they jog into range...

Turok is the best first-person action game in a very long time. It is, basically about killing dinosaurs and people, and shooting big chunky weapons at giant robots, etc. Pretty standard stuff by all accounts, but it simply outclasses every other game in the genre in terms of graphics, animation and gameplay.

The graphics Boss, the graphics!

The first thing that strikes you about Turok is the simply amaz-

Gloriously pretty, and plenty of ways to make things go 'BOOM'. The weapons in Turok are some of the most spectacular in any 1st person game

ing landscape graphics. From the rough rock walls in your periphery to the frothing mist of a waterfall, to the lens flare of the sun and the flowing layers of cloud overhead, the detail is absolutely stunning. In this way it comes closer to reality than anything else ever released in this genre.

This game will push your 3D card to the very max, in whatever resolution you play it in: Turok employs transparency effects and

realtime animation that were absolutely unthinkable before the advent of direct hardware acceleration. And Hardware it is, as all of the creatures in the game are impeccably animated, mostly using a procedure called Motion Capture and an obscene amount of movement frames per second which makes them look absolutely realistic. This is similar to the methods used to animate the animals in Jurassic Park. They look balanced, dextrous and extremely dangerous. And of course when you ventilate their heads and let in the fresh air, they kick and flail with believable pain as their dino-juices drain from gaping crater wounds. Not to mention the amazing detail with which each character is rendered, or the huge amount of polygons which compose them. The human adversaries, for instance have detailed individual faces with a range of expressions, I could go on about it for pages and pages, but basically, Turok's graphics are just plain kick-arse, period.

Hunt dinosaurs

Despite Turok being named after dinosaur hunting, the majority of foes that you will be ventilating are the Campaigner's foot soldiers. This is actually a good thing, the imaginative range and variety of them is well big enough to avoid feeling repetitive. And their aforementioned animation makes them amazing to look at, so no problem there. As far as Dinosaurs go, you have the common Veliciraptors who sprint at you and bite your head, etc, the Dimetrodons who are slow chunky lizards, giant prehistoric flies, Pur-Lins, who are enormous humanoid reptile beasts that generally clobber you, soldiers riding Triceratops with an entire weapons platform onboard, and T-Rex, who is the bionically enhanced Campaigner's bodyguard. In fact as you progress through the levels the opposing technology increases, and the dinosaurs are gradually fitted with bionics and attached weapons, and aliens and

high-tech sentry robots join the offensive team.

The other thing any first-person shooter must have is cool weapons. Unsurprisingly, Turok's are exceptional. A variety of ballistics experts were consulted during the modelling process, and the results really do speak for themselves. Even the stretchy compound bow which you use to fire Rambo-Style warheads at things has variable power, and ergo variable trajectory. The range of guns that Turok can use, as a native hunter-gatherer kind of dude, is pretty impressive. Auto Shotguns, Ak-47's, Grenade Launchers, Plasma Rifles, Particle-Disruptors, Anti-Aircraft Miniguns (ala Predator) that actually do hell amounts of damage. Oh, and remember that little pop-gun we used to call BFG? Turok brought it back. This time it's Nuclear, and many's the pesky crowd of bionic punks you will vaporise with that hefty tool!

And naturally the light sources spill across the weapon in hand, shading and highlighting perfectly.

Mouse control? Forget it!

The Control for Turok have been fairly well implemented for the PC with support for Keyboard alone or with Joystick, or with Mouse. Support for custom joysticks is also in place, and

OK, so the figures here might look a little weird, but they're actually very fluent and realistic when moving

a good thing too, because Turok is a little bit tricky compared to your standard interface. There is a layer of complexity which adds things like momentum to every movement you make, which creates slight delays in rapid movement which don't always translate smoothly from the Nintendo incarnation. In fact, the standard "Quake" config is not fantastic, limitations to your maximum turning speed make it a mouse-slapping kind of affair as you try to get that extra bit of speed that you are denied. Better to play with a Joystick and keyboard, or just keyboard. It's a bit of a shame it doesn't work well with the mouse, after playing Quake

The pretty effects that sold a million Nintendos

all this time with no problem. It really comes down to the original scope of the interface.

Turok is probably the best one-player 3D action game to date. Although, until it goes multiplayer, it won't do much to enter the realm of Quake!

Ed Dawson

89 %

Category	1st-Person shooter
Players	1
Publisher	Acclaim
Price	$89.95
Rating	MA15+
Available	Now

For Groundbreaking 3D graphics, animation, and weapons. The most fun you can have playing by yourself.

Against Only a one player game! Sadly unimpressive mouse support. Needs a high-spec machine to run really smoothly.

Need P100, 16Mb RAM, Win95, 2nd Generation 3D graphics accelerator card (3dfx or Direct3d Compliant), 25 Mb HDD

Want P166+, 32Mb RAM

3D **3DFX GLIDE DIRECT 3D**

69

ARMOURED FIST 2

With just the right blend of realism and arcade action, Armoured Fist 2 could well be the tank sim
we've been waiting for since the last decent attempt at this tough genre - M1A2 from MicroProse.

Armoured Fist 2 (AF2) is a
M1A2 Abrams simulation
where you fill the boots of
a US Marine Corps tanker.
During training missions I
thought "ho hum", and in fact as
a professional Australian soldier,
I felt quite offended by some of
the FMV footage; call a bunch of
Australian tankers "girls" and
you'd be lucky to see the night
out! I was, however, quite
impressed as I progressed
through the game; it's not iM1A2
with improved graphics, and its
not simplistic. I think it might
just fill a niche gap between hard
core manoeuvre warfare and fast
paced quick fix simming.

No 3D card needed

AF2 uses an MMX capable
Voxel Space 2 graphics engine
that is DOS based and runs effi-
ciently under Win95. The game
does not require 3D hardware
support, instead, 3D effects are
achieved quite nicely by the
graphics engine itself, and with
all options on, runs without a
hitch on a Pentium 133. The
ground is covered with vegetation,
and all objects are well defined
and able to be targeted. Ground
definition was excellent, but I
must admit, it was decidedly hard
to find a place to go Hull Down,
something any die-hard tanky
would not like at all. Explosive
effects are good on armoured
vehicles and aircraft, but I gained
little satisfaction from targeting
buildings and fuel trucks because
they just crumpled.

You can select one of eight solo
missions, or one of four cam-
paigns, with each campaign con-
sisting of eight canned missions.
Novalogic continue to allow you
to select any mission in any
order. You should instead
progress through a campaign, be
rewarded for your achievements
or penalised for lack of ability.
The game does not offer a ran-
dom mission generator or mis-
sion editor, and this deficiency
does not stand up against today's
sim standards. The missions are,
however, a good cross-section of
offensive and defensive mis-

sions, with two of the
Campaigns being UN operations
in Africa and Belarus, and the
other two being major conflicts
in Turkey and Siberia.

Assume the position

Limited training is provided to
introduce you to land naviga-
tion, basic and advanced gun-
nery, and combined arms opera-
tions. Once in the tank you
assume the position of comman-
der, gunner or driver. The loader

is computer simulated. As the
Gunner you can use the combi-
nation of a four-button joystick
and pedals to turn the gun, lase
a target, load ammunition and
fire the weapon. Similar
mechanical control is given to
the Commander with the
Commander's Independent
Thermal Viewer (CITV) which
lets you view the countryside
independently of the gunner's
actions, select targets, identify
them, lase them and either hand

them over to your gunner, or the
rest of your platoon! Learn to
use the thermal viewer because
the enemy tanks often pop
smoke to hide withdrawal.

Once in the mission proper you
command a force consisting of
anywhere between one tank pla-
toon of four tanks, up to a
Battalion of 32 tanks. You can also
jump into any friendly tank in the
game, and assume any position in
any tank. Up to three AH64D
Apaches and up to a Battalion of
MLRS artillery are also In Direct
Support of most actions and are
called to cover you at your request.

You can change the preset way-
points to employ tactics such as
moving platoons by bounds,
however, you have no control
over other friendly forces in the
area such as a convoy being
escorted. This limits the tactical
flair you can employ because
they often get in the way and
cause mission failure. In reality,
during an advance, the senior
armoured officer has Operational
Control over all forces in the Van
Guard in order to coordinate and
concentrate Combat Power to
achieve the mission.

◄ Command up to 32 tanks in a battalion,
or any position in a single tank

DEVASTATOR

(above) about to destroy a baby milk factory
(left) the good stuff: shooting at other live targets

BULLSEYE

10 seconds of hell

Battle is brief but brilliant. Surround Sound, the roar of your gas turbine engine, a true feeling of motion at up to 60 mph. Apache Hellfires screaming down on unseen targets, the roar and muzzle flashes from friendly tanks; return fire from moving enemy armoured vehicles, and deadly Hind helicopters lurking behind hills. The Inter Vehicular Information System (IVIS) gives you situational awareness, and continual radio messages are broadcast on the SINCGARS

Command Net to complete the picture. Apache radio transmissions and fire mission orders also cross the net. You are often left with your heart in you mouth at the end of a mission.

On the down side, while the action is intense, missions are brief. Phase Lines are too close together for tank warfare and limit you ability to manoeuvre. There are also some glitches between the CITV, driver and gunner where the driver continually slams the hull toward all targets as they are engaged, then slams it back towards the next waypoint. This gives you momentary loss of situational awareness. Apache pilots also seem to continually fly to their death! No re-use capability there!

Network play overcomes many of the deficiencies in the canned missions, and gives you the ability to employ tactics. I'd like to see a mixture between this game and iM1A2 Abrams. Now that would be a winner for realistic tank sim fanatics!

Maj. Ian Lindgren

➕ **Plus**

82 %

Category	Tank Simulation
Players	1-8.
Publisher	Novalogic/EA
Price	$89:95
Rating	G
Available	Now
For	A good representation of combined arms battlefield manoeuvre within the limits of a small area of operation. Stunningly exciting gameplay.
Against	No ability to command all the forces in your area of operations. Some glitches in friendly AI. Lack of a random mission generator will limit the life of this game for individual players.
Need	DOS, Pentium 120 and 16 MB RAM.
Want	Pentium 133+ with MMX support.

71

JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER

Here they all come! Finally after years of waiting the new rush of Combat Flight Sims are landing. First up is JSF and ohhh boy does it look good.

Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) is based on a real military capability requirement currently progressing through the lengthy US Defence acquisition cycle. Two prototypes for the JSF are being developed the Boeing X-32 and the Lockheed Martin X-35. One will be selected as the JSF and put into service sometime after 2008. In this game you get to fly both.

JSF gives you the option of selecting 3Dfx at up to 600 x 800, or non-3Dfx at up to 1024 x 768 resolution. The hitch is, you really need some processing power to play the game in non-3Dfx mode because the terrain detail is something to behold. I will review the game in its 3Dfx capability using my Cardex Dragon 1000 3Dfx card because

the game really comes to life in terms of 3D effects. Firing an AMRAMM is an awesome display of bright light, so too is a flare, and looking into the glare of the sun is so realistic it's just, well, real!

It looks REAL

JSF offers the standard Quickstart, Campaign and Multiplayer options that we have come to expect from quality sims. I would have liked to see a training option added because the complex technology would

better be absorbed by the human brain through reading and then by example. Gameplay is offered in four Campaigns ranging from easiest to hardest in Afghanistan, Colombia, Korea and the Kola Peninsula. Each Campaign includes 2.4 million square miles of terrain, which looks stunning at any height! Millions of ground based objects exist and each is modelled in realistic proportion. The graphics engine

doesn't just pop them up as they come into view, instead each object becomes larger as you get closer, and patches of fog are sometimes seen between the hills, before they clear up as you get nearer. For the life of me it just looks so real it's hard to describe.
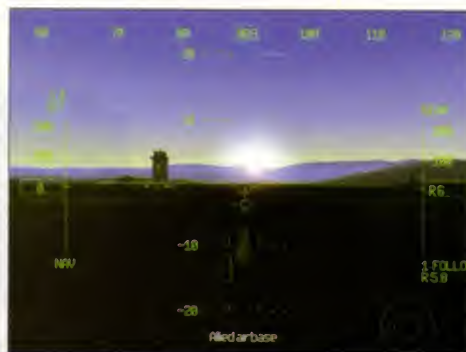
(above) near realistic environment at sunrise

(main) AMRAMM launched from an X 32-B (right) showing the glare of the launch and sun glint from another aspect
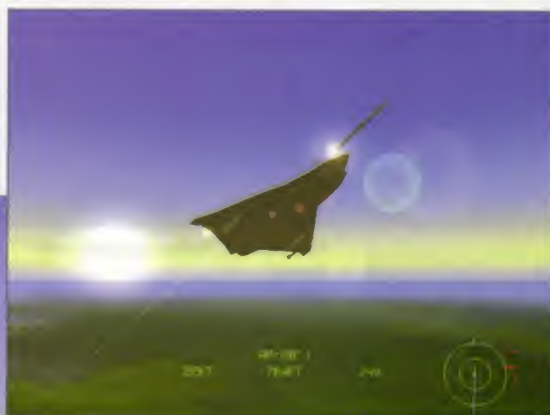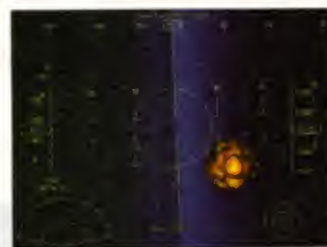
frame rates, really gave a great sensation of speed no matter what height. Enemy AI is very good, and if you unmask yourself or inadvertently reduce your stealthiness, the klaxons and bitching betty give you a hammering!

The first flight sim to make mature use of 3Dfx gets full marks for innovation and technical simulation. It's well worth the money for the visual effects ride of your life, but might not have a long life on the HDD if an expansion disk with a Random Mission Generator is not released soon.

Maj. Ian Lindgren
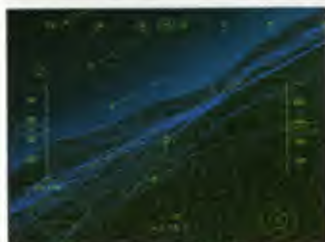
Terrain Overlay of the HMD during NOE night flying in Afganistan

Mission planner for Kola Peninsula

Each Campaign gives you an overall mission statement, then a finite number of ground, sea and airborne threats, and primary and secondary targets. You then select which targets to engage using the Mission Planner which suggests flight profiles for Nap of the Earth (NOE) or high altitude flying. Alternatively you can select your own waypoints to ingress and egress as you please. Unfortunately, the Mission Planner doesn't go into the detail that is found in Falcon3 and EF 2000, so there is not as much control here as I would like. Nonetheless it is a good interface whether you are a beginner or an in-depth planner, and you will find yourself flying over a number of virtual days and nights, through all sorts of weather that really pits your skills against the enemy's.

The highest of techs

Once in the cockpit, the 21st Century technology becomes apparent. Select the Helmet Mounted Display (HMD) rather than a HUD to get a feel for

the future. Status, info, attack, strategic and offensive MFDs are displayed at a keystroke, and immense amounts of data can be selectively displayed and overlaid on your HMD as desired, from sources such as In Flight Data Link (IFDL) with AWACS, friendly GPS gear, thermal imagery, active radar emissions and so on. In saying this, the only way to get the data up is an obscure combination of keystrokes, so thank heavens for the aircraft's automatic terrain following capabilities, which gives you the time to run the keys. A communications facility is available with wingmen, the tower and AWACS, but it's nothing to write home to Mum about.

NOE Flying is a must for most missions. The Autopilot will follow the waypoints, and you hug the ground and get thrown around something fierce! This leaves you free to concentrate on the MFDs, mask your movements, use your wingmen to clear your path, and most importantly conduct surgical strikes using conventional or soon to be developed GPS guided stand off munitions. If you're game, turn on the Terrain Overlay, and manually go lower than Autopilot NOE, especially at night, and wow what a ride! One item of gameplay that deserves a mention is ejecting, then being capable of running around and defending oneself. I never survived long enough to find out if I could be rescued!

Super fast graphics

The flight model seems to hold its own, and with the fast 3Dfx

85 %

Category	Flight Sim
Players	1-8.
Publisher	EIDOS
Price	TBA
Rating	G
Available	Now

For	Close to real 3D terrain and object modelling. Great implementation of soon to be available weapons systems, munitions, threat warning devices and navigation aids.
Against	A limited Mission Planner. No Random Mission Generator. Really dicky keystrokes required to use MFDs.
Need	Win95, Pentium 166 and 3Dfx Card.
Want	Pentium 166 plus and at least 32 MB RAM.

3Dfx Voodoo Graphics & Voodoo Rush

ZORK GRAND INQUISITOR

It's the grandpappy of all adventure games and we just plain love it.
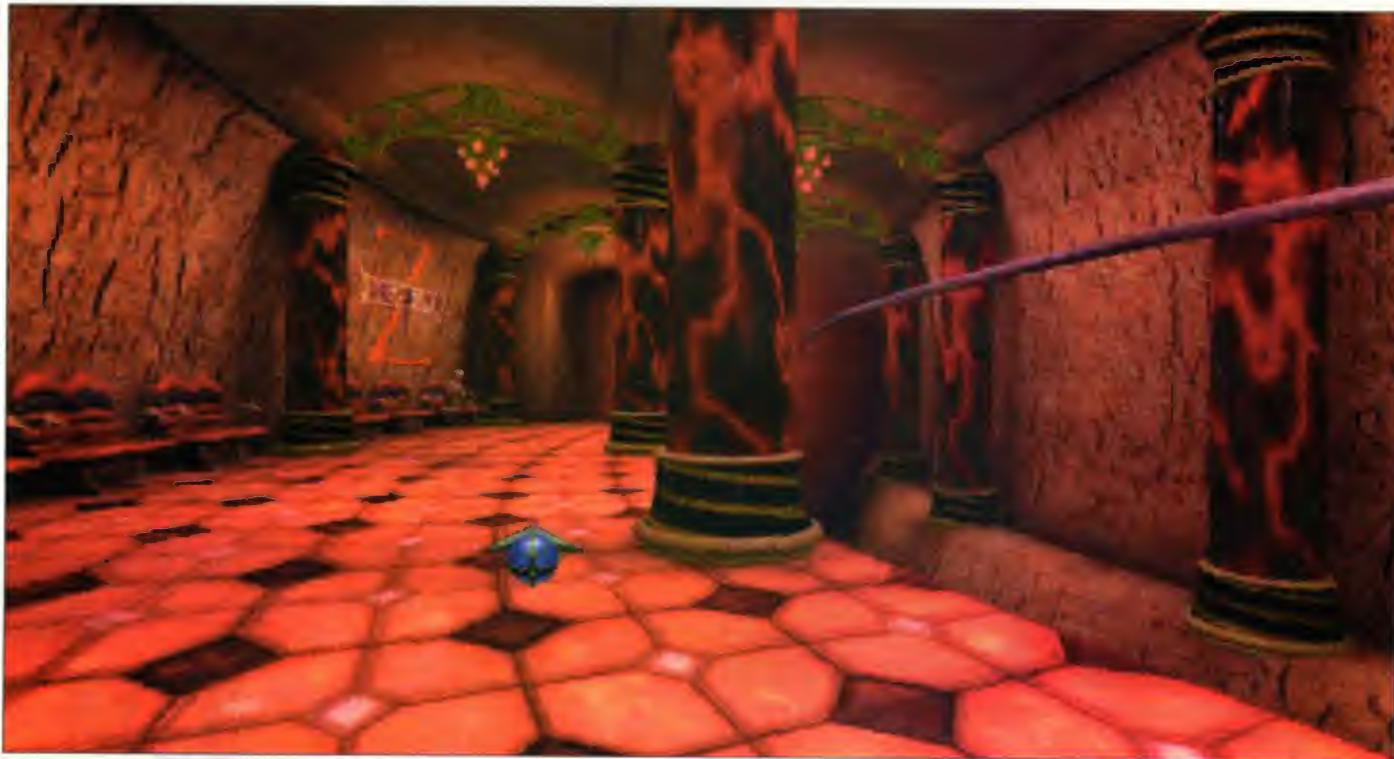
The legacy that is Zork is one that is both long-standing and always eagerly anticipated. For good reason too. The incredibly rich and detailed world initially created by a group from MIT was the first computer game to bridge the gap between book and game.

Let me then be the first to congratulate whoever the bright spark at Activision was that decided to recapture the feel and brilliant story telling role the initial adventures played. Zork Grand Inquisitor is a literal testament of proof that the nostalgic gameplay "us veteran gamers" lust after and modern ultra expensive production processes can create a game so overwhelming and perfect that it's like rediscovering the entire adventuring genre all over again. We've all been awaiting this day since Magnetic Scrolls closed shop many moons ago, and in Zork Grand Inquisitor it has arrived.

Zork roots

With the latest Zork Adventure, Activision have returned to the very root of Zork, the Great

All the majesty and brilliance of the Zork universe brought to life. The Z-Vision 360 degree render technique has been ported from Zork Nemesis, and is a far cry from the series' humble text beginnings

Underground Empire (GUE) embodied in the original text adventure. I won't give too much away but the story is along the lines of all magic in Zork being outlawed by the Grand Inquisitor (who is the boss of you? ME! I am the boss of you). The Dungeon Master (introduced way back in Zork 2) is now resident inside a lamp after being hit with the Frobozz electric wizard repellant. The Grand Inquisitor has deemed that technology is the new saviour of Zork and that all magic must be shunned (and while you're at it, shun shunning). Any who fail to comply to the Inquisitors new rules will be totemized. What's totemization? Very painful we hear!

Graphically Zork Grand Inquisitor is a masterful piece of work. The Zork world has never looked so alive. Lavish colours, dazzling sunsets and the absolute-

EGGPLANTS

ly brilliant Z-Vision effect ported over from Zork Nemesis. Z-Vision is the process of rendering a scene in 360 degrees. Within the game, this allows you to spin around you're environment offering a 1st person perspective akin to viewing a mural in a cylinder. It's a fantastic process that

Plus

N
W✳E
S

http://www.activision.com/
games/adventure/zgi/index
.shtml

ONLY YOU
CAN PREVENT
POOZLE FIRES

brings so much to an adventure game. You get all the interactivity of a 1st person perspective, but with all the beauty of a professionally rendered scene. Each scene too is lovingly created with every conceivable detailed added. Designs on carpet, textures on walls, grass, flowers, each scene is truly a work of art and visually, Zork Grand Inquisitor has you memorized and in awe at its 65,000 colour beauty.

Zork grooves

Zork's music ranges from tranquil and very adventury, to 70's

style groove in Hades (yes, the classic location from Zork 2 can now be SEEN). As for 70's music in Hades, I couldn't quite work out whether Activision were just using some old Interstate 76 tracks lying around or if there's a joke I'm just not getting. Other delightful touches include built in Q-Sound for 3D sound effects without the need for a 3D sound card. It works wonderfully too, turning around a fountain for example, your ability to discern its exact location is frighteningly accurate.

So reader, what's your name. Sorry, I missed that, let's just call you ageless, faceless, gender neutral, culturally ambiguous adventure person, or afgancap for short. Totemize me for giving it away, but the above is just an example of some of the wonderful humour to be discovered in Zork Grand Inquisitor. Like the original Zork, there was serious adventuring to do, but there was also time for a good laugh. Zork Grand Inquisitor offers not only good humour along the way but delightful puns and even funnier situations. I'm not talking simplistic made for the masses American sitcom humour either. But that very rare kind of American humour, the witty funniest kind that can be found in old comedies such as "Soap". It's cerebral, comical and of the quality that you know you'll see it quoted on the bottom of email messages some time in the future.

Zork Grand Inquisitor sits alone, very alone. It's a modern computer game with the associated big budget frills, but inside is a fantastically addictive and rewarding adventure game that encapsulates all the brilliance of the original Zorks. It's so good,

that in this review I've totally steered away from revealing much about the plot at all. It's so much fun to discover it for yourself that I just couldn't give anything away. I don't care if you hate adventures, you have to go and get Zork Grand Inquisitor, it's gaming perfection.

Jere Lawrence

PC PowerPlay PLATINUM AWARD

Category	Adventure
Players	1-2
Publisher	Activision
Price	$TBA
Rating	TBA
Available	Now
For	Fantastic story, wonderful character interaction and development plus all the feel of the classic adventures. Like a good book, you just can't put Zork Grand Inquisitor down
Against	The "Linked play" option for 2 people to adventure at once really doesn't work at all. We tested it through 28.8 modems and it was so slow that it was unplayable. Works great through a network though, so get your mate to bring his machine over
Need	P90, 16Mb RAM, Win95
Want	P200, 32Mb, 24 x CDROM

NETSTORM

It's a Real Time Strategy game - or is it? Or is everything else? Exactly what is a RTS anyway?
You probably thought it was something like Red Alert... Jere doesn't...

897sp

Take control of a floating sky-island. Build crazy Tetris bridges to reduce the economic efficiency of your enemy. Yeah, we understand

1800sp

I f you're a fan of the Real Time Strategy genre, then by now you would be of the pretty much widely agreed upon opinion that games such as Red Alert don't really offer real time strategy, but are more a Real Time tactical battle.

Strategy, by definition, is the overall approach you take to resolve a battle. Tactics, on the other hand, are the manoeuvres made to ensure success of the strategy. In theory, if your strategy is bad, excellent tactics can still prevail, but it's unlikely. A good strategy on the other hand even with poorly executed tactics have a much better chance of a win. In Red Alert for example, there really isn't much strategy. The strategic goals are simple, even simplistic. Grab as much ore as you can and build more tanks then your enemy, *yawn*. Considering that all other Real Time Strategy games to come have been a clone of C&C/Red Alert, what would happen if a game came out that focussed primarily on Strategy with tactics playing a minor role? Well then you'd have Netstorm.

Seriously cerebral

Netstorm is more than a breath of fresh air, it's a stalwart thunderstorm that sweeps away all ideas of Real Time Strategy involving lots of mouse clicking and bases being overrun by one particular type of unit. Netstorm is a seriously cerebral undertaking that leaves you satisfactorily drained after each mission. What makes Netstorm so unique is in the way it presents the battlefield. For starters, everyone has their own island in which only a limited number of structures can fit. You can't initially stretch out and claim other islands either. Instead, you have to be thinking on your toes, deciding what the best structures to build for the particular opponent are.

Different structures have the ability to build different unit or attack types, just like in other Real time Strategy games, but you have to decide in advance which units you want to build. This mixes a dangerous game of either awaiting your opponents first strike and trying to defend his attack, or viewing the overall play area carefully and pre-selecting the right units to do the job.

The "factories" or workshops as they're named in Netstorm which produce units initially only allow you to select 2 different unit types to build. For 800 gems (the collectable in game currency used to build and create units) the workshop can be upgraded to produce one more unit type. It's actually more efficient to create another workshop that can make 2 units, but then you're filling up the limited island space you have and leaving less room to place defences.

If Netstorm already sounds like quite a challenge, there is one final factor added to ensure that the best mind on the day will win - bridges. In Netstorm, the

Most units are stationary defences, a departure from devestating mobile ground forces common in other games

only way to be able to build assaulting units near your enemy and to collect crystals from "crystal geysers" is by building bridges to them.

This may sound simplistic, but the bridge pieces come to you in the form akin to a Tetris brick. When building out to an enemy and a geyser, there are 2 things you want in a bridge, efficiency and strength. Efficiency comes from your own ability to manipulate the bridge piece and line it up with the object you're trying to connect to. If you're in a hurry, new bridge pieces appear quickly, but in a weakened state. You can lay these down, but expect your opponent to attack them almost immediately. The alternative is to try and use every strong bridge piece to get to your destination.

Super efficient war

This is a challenge in itself and opens up another facet of the game. For every defensive/offensive unit you want to build, the creation spell has to travel across your bridge network to your destination. If you have a twisting, inefficient path your production will be significantly slowed. Likewise, your opponent can use this to his advantage by deliberately building highly inefficient bridge systems that do nothing but force you to build around him, slowing down your own attack.

Finally, very few units in Netstorm are actually mobile. Instead each has a particular characteristic. The sun dials for example can fire anywhere, but only within a very small radius. Sun cannons on the other hand can fire very long distances, but only up, down, left or right. A sun cannon assault can actually be averted with the weaker sundials by using your Tetris skills (i.e. spatial intelligence) to build bridges out in a position where the sun cannon can't actually hit the sun dial. To assist in this, clicking each unit will have it's firing radius and direction displayed so you can effectively plan attack or defence.

Tank rush be gone!

To finally ensure that tank rushes and the like don't happen, the few mobile units in Netstorm

there are you can't actually control. Instead, they will attack targets in a particular order. All defensive structures will pull fire from mobile units first, and only when they are all destroyed, will offensive targets be attacked.

All these factors in Netstorm add up to one intense gaming experience. The single player missions are unprecedented in their playability and strategic prowess, a multiplayer game however is a totally different ball-game. With excellent Internet options built in, Netstorm makes for an excellent multiplayer experience. Be warned though, a clever player on the other end can really make you feel inferior, what's more, in some cases you may just be incapable of beating them. Like Tetris though, you can learn a lot from another player and your skills can gain immensely. Like chess your opponent can have an off day as you laugh maniacally and sacrifice his priest to the furies.

If you loved Red Alert and feel that it incorporates all the real time *ahem* "Strategy" for you, don't get Netstorm - it isn't a bully-boy click fest. If however you've been lusting after a more strategic and intellectual game, then Netstorm is definitely for you and you'll consider it deserving of 100%. Netstorm is the only game worthy of the title "Real Time Strategy".

Jere Lawrence

Plus

www.activision.com

85%

Category	Real time strategy
Players	1-8
Publisher	Activision/Titanic
Price	$89.95
Rating	G8+
Available	Now

For Abundance of strategy. Someone at Activision/ Titanic is utterly brilliant and devised just about every means to ensure that Netstorm was a strategic masterpiece, and not just an armour slugfest.

Against Patient thinking people need only apply. Red Alerters/Quakers will find the game way to cerebral and themselves ultimately alienated from the title. This is why Netstorm only receives 85%.

Need P90, 16Mb RAM, Win95, 2 x CDROM.

Want P90, 16Mb RAM, Win95, Internet Connection.

SID MEIER'S GETTYSBURG!

Sid's back! This is the debut game from his new outfit Firaxis. Funky name Sid!

The Battle of Gettysburg. A desperate military push by the Confederate South to make inroads into the Yankee North. A battle that would prove pivotal to the defeat of the Rebels. Historically important, but to most gamers fed on an appetite of futuristic high tech assault weapons, not the most blood pumping of subject matter. Well along comes newly created Fireaxis games starring Sid Meier (we worship thee, we worship thee!) of Civilization fame and some equally talented game designers. The result? It's finally happened. Big fat purple pigs are flying high in the sky, because at last we have a Civil War game that is not only real time, but no longer purely the domain of kinky Civil War fans that wear Confederate flag underwear and suffer seizures at the sight of a non-turn based game.

When genre's collide. Looking much like the excellent Battleground series, Gettysburg adds real time to the Civil War mix

Into the valley of death

Your troops come in three main flavours, being artillery, cavalry and your main force, the ever reliable infantry. Infantry are organized into regiments of anything from 100-700 men, although on screen they are represented by only a few units. Each of these regiments can be given orders such, changing formation, advancing, retreating and when the time is right... the charge. As you progress through missions, brigades are introduced. Basically a brigade is a set of 4-5 regiments under the control of an on screen leader. It is through the control of brigades that you will inflict the most buckshot on your hated enemy.

Gettysburg emphasizes that a battlefield is not a flat piece of cardboard with hexes, and that soldiers are men under stress and not just a collection of unthinking pixels. All the scenarios are played out on 3D terrain, so rolling hills, forests and corn fields all have an effect on battle. Positioning your brigade on the top of a hill for example, sees them gaining a firing advantage and generally being happy campers. The troops and their behaviour is what makes this battleground really come alive. Each regiment has a skill rating from green recruits up to crack, experienced blood 'n' gutters. Manoeuvring your experienced troops into positions under heavy enemy fire is a better bet than sending in the raw recruits, as everything comes down to one thing: morale. A battle between regiments rarely sees the losing group totally annihilated. As men are killed confidence lowers until the point when even the greatest level of testosterone can't stop them from fleeing. When the enemy flees, the all important advance comes into play.

Pounding your right flank

As gaining and holding ground is of vital importance, so is the

It's on! The foolhardy 26th NC go the tonk with the big barrel cannon boys

difficulty of doing so. Battles are usually slow and steady in these pre-rocket launcher days. Most of the time it's a case of setting your men up in position and then watching for quite a while (there is a speed adjuster for the impatient) to see how the battle fares. See an enemy position looking light on the ground? Try advancing that wee bit. Your right flank taking a pounding? Withdraw into the woods, or risk

The fearsome 12th Ill Cavalry prepare for a skewering
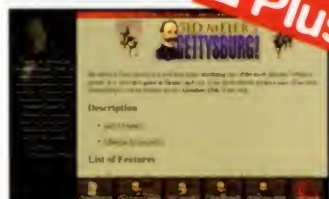
moving artillery closer in. It's these subtle choices in battle, that can change the tide of war and see you taking that vital hill that for 1/2 an hour of real time you've been sweating over. This is the stuff of battle, and it's excellent.

Single player modes consist of the full three day Gettysburg Campaign (playable from either the Rebel or the Yankee sides), twenty five individual scenarios and a random mission generator. Lacking is a mission editor, and while that's a shame the battles included offer a banquet in attacking and defending missions. Multiplayer Gettysburg is highly involving, time consuming but an absolute delight. I met up with three American

guys on the Internet, and we paired off into two man teams. The battle soon formed into a huge line that ran from east to west, and during this long protracted war, my partner and I were always pulling reinforcements off each other, asking if their end of the line needed some beefing up etc. Voice chat is also supported but I couldn't try this out as my microphone met an unfortunate demise when the great night of beer and Karaoke turned horribly wrong.

Civil War geeky game

My biggest gripe with Gettysburg is the confusion in having large amounts of brigades on screen, and you make the mistake of breaking them up into unorganized regiments all over the place. Trying to get them back into order is a difficult task, and I lost many a battle because my poor overloaded brain just couldn't fathom the mess on screen. Some will say that it's the price you pay for poor battlefield organisation, but the game could be more forgiving in this area. Ammunition and the maintenance of supply lines does not play any part in the game, I wasn't bothered by this but some will find it disappointing. Nit picking aside, Gettysburg is a brilliant war game. Civil War

fans, go and get this now you'll be in heaven. If you love battlefield tactics but have been put off by Civil War geeky games in the past, make sure you check this one out.

Pete Sharpe

✚ Plus

www.gettysburg.ea.com
Patch 1.2 available at time of writing.
A site that has a forum where the designers including Sid "Gaming God" Meier listen to and participate in discussions about the game. Wow. Forum section devoted to multiplayer match making as well.

X-CAR

This one was due out quite some time ago, but Bethesda hauled it back into the garage to include support for the 3Dfx. Here, finally, is X-Car, so is it a lemon then?

P itching itself into the no-man's land between serious driving sim and arcade racer, Bethesda's new "experimental racing" title is attempting to be all things to all people. For one, there's the enticement of being able to drive the very latest prototype super-cars, burning around wild tracks in futuristic vehicles at dangerously stupid speeds. For two, the novel idea of being let loose in a high tech garage and constructing then testing your very own car. For three, the promise of doing both of the above with the help of a souped-up, 3D-accelerated version of Bethesda's XnGine - the graphics engine responsible for Daggerfall and Terminator. While it sure sounds great in theory, things don't seem quite so good when you hit the track.

A committee game

Okay, let's expand on these three points and try to determine where the problem lies. With its "experimental racing" approach, X-Car abandons the more familiar driving game types such as Formula One, Indycar, stock and sports cars. Instead they've opted for prototypes, which are designed specifically to test new technologies and designs. There are over a dozen readymade cars for you to choose from at the start of the game. It's somewhat unfortunate, then, that they all feel pretty much the same to drive, thus already negating one of the game's promised special features. In such an event questions should also be raised concerning the driving model - why does it treat all cars as virtually identical? And, what else is it doing that we should know about? But more of this later.

Once you have selected your car, you are able to decide how you want to race it. There's a Pre-season option, which is essentially a testing session (you do some laps, pit to modify the car, do some more laps, etc). The Single Track option should be fairly obvious (you get practice and qualifying periods before a race, as well as

opportunity to fiddle with the car mechanics), while the Circuit mode lets you devise a series of races over any number of the 10 available tracks to accumulate points. Further, you'll find "realistic" and "action" modes to choose, varying weather conditions and damage potential, an adjustable skill level and number of opponents, as well as several driving aids (spin correction, auto-shift

The potential for X-Car is quite high - tooling around in the latest experimental cars... but sadly, it's not that well executed

and braking, racing line and steering help, the usual stuff).

Telemetry tedium

So far, so much run-of-the-mill driving game. Even when it comes to the supposedly unique "design your own car" shenanigans, there's really little evident that most serious sims haven't
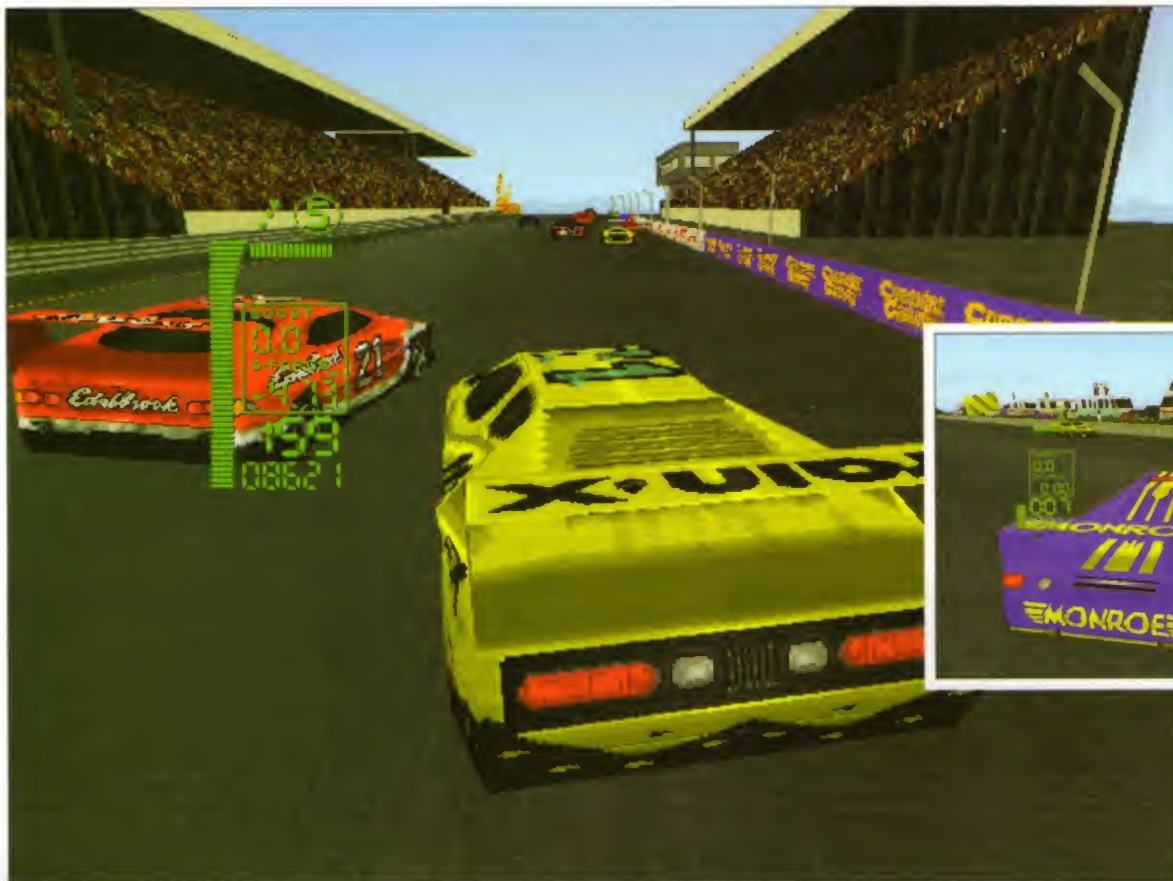
done before. X-Car's options may be slightly more anal than those found in CART or GP2, but so what if you can choose your engine, brake materials, or tyre pressure? Who on earth wants to bore themselves

Bethesda will be adding new tracks and cars for you to download at www.xcar.com

to death reading telemetry? All anyone will bother modifying are the gear ratios and front and rear wings. Anything else is extraneous window-dressing and can quite safely be ignored. Having said that, all these options are presented on one easy-to-use screen - it may look ugly, but it is simple and efficient.

Oh yeah, and there is another design option. You can - wait for it! - enter the Paint Shop and exchange your old, garish, orange and blue monstrosity for some sleek, silver textures and brand new sponsors' logos. Unless, that is, you are running the game with 3D-acceleration, in which case it doesn't work. Degradingly, you will have to revert to normal graphics to see your cosmetic changes in full effect. I guess a patch may fix this, but there's no word of it at the X-Car site.

Of course, none of this means anything, to be honest. A driving game will, rather predictably, live or die solely on its driving model. A good one can save a poorly-presented game, yet a crap one will destroy even the most extravagantly lavish. X-Car, I'm sad to report, is absolutely crippled by its driving model. Simply, the cars just feel horrible. Like lead weights on wheels, like shopping trolleys with an under-developed sense of direction, like that hilarious

new Mercedes flop. Trying to drive these prototype machines isn't particularly difficult, it just has little to do with reality.

Skinny-road syndrome

Hindering the driving model to a sizeable extent are the tracks themselves. Although they are mostly quite well-designed and offer a decently varied challenge (Lime Rock is small and consists mainly of fast, sweeping bends, Seattle provides a number of slower, right-angled corners, while the Mayan Concourse is a devilishly tricky combination of both), the tracks are predominantly too narrow for this type of racing. Often there's hardly enough room to even overtake someone, so skinny are many sections of each track.

Visually, X-Car is reasonable. There's a moderate sense of speed, but the colours are dull and the backdrops utterly hideous. Couple this with the inconsistent AI - at times the computer cars are brutal and ruthless when attempting a passing manoeuvre, seemingly unconcerned that they have just driven into your rear several times and almost destroyed the front end of their car, and yet at other times they will appear quite content to patiently putter along behind you while you cruise around the track at 30 or

40km/h (I once even came to a complete standstill in the centre of the track and watched in amusement as the computer cars steadily queued up down the road, waiting for me to start moving again!) - and you have an exceptionally average racing game.

I love racing games - and I have loved a number of Bethesda's previous titles, too - but playing X-Car was a dishearteningly mediocre experience.

David Wildgoose

61%

Category	Racing
Players	1-2 (modem), 1-8 (network)
Publisher	Bethesda
Price	TBA
Rating	G
Available	Now
For	A nice idea. Funky looking telemetry screen.
Against	Exceedingly-badly executed. Hopeless driving model, shonky AI, below-par graphics. And no fun at all.
Need	P60, 16Mb RAM, 2xCD
Want	3Dfx

3DFX GLIDE

HEAVY GEAR

It all happened for legal licensing reasons, but the end result is that MicroProse is now the home of the FASA Mechwarrior universe, with Activision picking up the Heavy Gear ticket. Then there's Sierra's Earthsiege 3 on the horizon... It's a good time to Mech.

It was a sad day for Mechwarrior pilots everywhere. After an excellent series of games, Activision announced that no longer were they going to produce Mechwarrior titles. Apparently FASA (the owners of the whole Mech idea) had pulled the license and wanted a crack at making Mechwarrior 3 together with MicroProse. This meant that the sequel to Mech 2 was going to be on the drawing board for quite some time. For some fans this was unthinkable. Dressing up in cardboard boxes and armed with sharpened broomsticks, they would run around in lounge rooms bumping into each other yelling "Target acquired" and "Mech down near sector bean bag". Into this sad state of affairs steps Activision sporting Heavy Gear. A brand new license based on the paper and dice RPG of the same name.

Oklahoma never again. A US Justice Dept. security mech stands ground outside the Clinton Memorial illegitimate-child care centre. You have 5 seconds to comply...
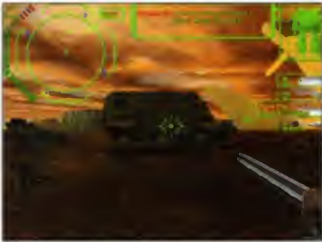
God bless Activision - can they do no wrong?

Multiplayer Mech'n madness

Multiplayer in Heavy Gear is a new and much improved experience. In my first online match, my partner and I stood on top of a high ridge snipering our poor defenseless victim down below. The crafty bugger taunted us with some choice words, and then skated off at high speed into a valley out of sight. We both pursued, splitting off trying to flank him from either side. Sadly he took cover which resulted in my getting too close and receiving a mortal wound. Laying on the ground minus one leg, I was summarily executed with messages of "Ha Ha you suck" appearing on my monitor. It's a tough war out there readers, watch yourself.

All of this action is courtesy of Activision's Heavy Gear server. Sign up as either a Northern or Southern warrior and enter the battlefield. Your missions will have you teaming up with and opposing other Internet warriors, with the mission outcome having a lasting effect on the wider war. The Activision server keeps track of all results, and adjusts the front line on the main map accordingly. Knowing that your battle is not an isolated meaningless affair is the next level of incentive in online gaming. Rest assured. The only bad news? Heavy Gear's multi-player component is still in "Beta" form. This means that bugs and the occasional crash can occur, but I found things quite stable. An update will become available ending the Beta state, but even in its present form Heavy Gear is a definite winner in the multi-player stakes.

Big guns

The storyline is set in the future with Earth's space empire being broken up into planetary warring factions. On Terra Nova the long running war between the Northern Confederacy and the Southern Republic continues in bloody fashion with technology only increasing the brutality. The Heavy Gear is the ultimate in weaponry for both sides (except for the planet vaporization beam, but that was banned for taking the fun out of war) combining speed and deadly firepower all in one bad ass looking war machine. So what is the big difference between the old style Mech and a Heavy Gear? The new boys on the block are smaller and look more like an exoskeleton of a man. They hold rifles (but BIG ones) can throw grenades and mortars but most importantly duck and sidestep unlike the Mechs of old. A particularly heavy weapons' hit can knock them over, requiring a quick standup before you transform into a sitting duck. Add the ability to engage into high speed courtesy of wheels, and Heavy Gear demonstrates a clear departure from the lumbering machines of previous Mech games. The old strategies of combatants circling each other in dances of death and straight marches with guns blazing don't cut it in this new world of agility and speed. Your average Gear replaces the need for masses of armour and weapons with the aim of using the environment for cover and shooting advantage. They aren't metal pansies though. Various styles of high velocity guns, energy weapons and rockets make up the armoury. Missiles are present but have been balanced so the days of the walking missile launcher disguised as a Mech are thankfully gone.

Fast and sharp

The battle environment is another of the improvements. Mountains are larger and more accessible allowing for sniper positioning and a more 3D watch above and below style of fighting. With the advent of stealthy ability on some Gears, mountain passes can offer a deadly strike position. Admiring the view from high altitude is a visual treat, but all this heavily depends on your chosen graphic resolution. Being based on the Mechwarrior Mercenaries

Mech'n for fun and profit

If only we all had our own personal giant robot killing machine. Sure the world would be a happier and nicer place, but what would you do with yours?

VS.

1. Hunt down the Spice Girls. Yes we all live in fear of "Girl Power", but lets see Scary Spice come up against a 50 tonne metal stomper armed with Spice seeking missiles and an auto-cannon. Oh the joy.

2. Today's Road Rage is dull and not nearly violent enough. Not any more.

3. Your VW Beetle not making much of an impression on your first date? A Five gigawatte auto-targeting laser should do the trick.

4. The demise of the Spice Girls could open the way for the Mech boys. A new band which takes the world by storm with their hit single "Mech up your Life". Ginger Mech as a hot sex symbol? It's got to be.

engine, three resolution modes are on offer. 320x200 looks horrible, one to avoid. 640x480 looks decent and will maintain good framerates on a P133-P166 with some tinkering of options. 3D acceleration is here to stay, and is the definite way to fully enjoy Heavy Gear. Smooth textures and lighting effects are a joy but what the hell is up with the explosions? Flat looking bitmaps that have no place alongside today's modern 3D cards. Ugh.

Piloting huge metal juggernauts is offered in both storyline and career modes. Storyline mode casts you as Edward Scott, hero of the day. Follow his adventures through Wing Commander FMV cut scene land, as mission by mission the war comes closer to victory. The use of FMV is not overblown, with the plot having some surprises and generally inspiring you to just do one more mission before hot cocoa and bed time. Career mode lets you choose between being part of the southern or northern forces. Unlike the storyline option, there are no cutscenes and the missions are not linear. Instead they are based on success or failure having an effect on the strength of your side's overall front line position. Whichever mission style is chosen you can customize your vehicles from the ground up as is the Mech tradition. The higher the rank you attain, the greater your access to deadlier weapons and improved Gears.

Plausibility be damned! These mechs look Japanese-manga cool & carry BIG GUNS!

Fast and deep

Activision have taken a step forward here. A faster paced game Heavy Gear is by no doubt, but the use of tactics keeps it out of the shallow "Quake meets Mech game" that you might have initially suspected. There's the occasional low moment. Damaged inflicted by a cactus, was an unintentional Monty Python incident. Similar in style and presentation to the previous Mech series, Heavy Gear distinguishes itself purely on the merits of the new machines. They offer larger versatility in combat and are just plainly more fun to pilot than the Mechs of old.

Pete Sharpe

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 97/98

We keep going on about it... Great graphics do not a great game make. Gameplay is what you need, and this has it in spades.

I've said it before (and been teased mercilessly about it) but I'll say it again. I love football unconditionally. I love playing it, I love watching it, and I love quality football management sims. Thus I love Championship Manager 97/98 - CM2 has been the best management sim for a couple of years, and this latest (stand-alone) update is bloody wonderful. OK, fine, I realise that this is one of those games that only enthusiasts will appreciate and love, so if you don't like football or management sims you may as well start turning the pages.

Plus
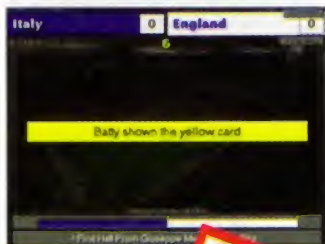
www.compulink.co.uk/~champman.

The home page for all CM2 editions, with lots of enticing info about CM3.

Must love soccer

Hi! Now that we've gotten rid of everyone else, let's get down to it shall we? CM 97/98 is the quintessential anal-retentive management sim. It's made by the Collyer brothers in partnership with their publishers Eidos, and with the help of research from fans across the world who contribute to the player database that forms the backbone of the game. The brothers Collyer have been at it for more than ten years now, and over that period have never seemed to lose their dedication or love for the game, which shows with CM 97/98, despite a fairly dated-looking interface. It's a game that feels like it's been made by a discrete part of the community for that part of the community (and I for one am very happy to be a card carrying member of that community).

Must love it a lot

There is a payoff however, and it is in the dated look of the interface. CM 97/98 isn't a new game, it's a continuation of the CM2 series, with a few tweaks here and there and player abilities and affiliations updated. The interface is still much the same as the previous CM2's - there's no pretty representation of the games, instead you get a commentary bar flashing up on the screen, saying things like "Riedle crosses the ball....Fowler with a majestic leap....GOAL for Liverpool!!", and as silly as it might sound it's actually quite suspenseful and works well. That's about as high-tech as it gets however, other than that you just trawl through screens and screens worth of stats and messages. This isn't a bad thing though, because such is the depth, ease of use, and real life accuracy of the stats that they are integrated within the game itself almost seamlessly - they're not annoying, they're helpful. As a result, it can take a while for the computer to work out all the days results for all the teams across Europe, including a full stat sheet for every player, assessing how many passes they made, how many shots, tackles, and so on, and rating them out of ten. Think about it. Every player in every game (including Internationals) every day. It's enough to overwhelm the new player, as are the other elements of the game. CM 97/98 puts you in charge of just about every facet of the managers job. You negotiate existing contracts, make bids on new players, implement and change team formation, asses player form, work out how much money is available, listen to players whinge about their lack of time on the pitch, send some out for loan, keep an eye on other job opportunities (you can apply for other manager jobs, including national teams), report to the board, keep an eye on upcoming schoolboy talent and plenty more. Simply put, it's got it all. If you like this kind of thing, you need CM 97/98 to keep you going until late next year when CM3 comes out.

Gareth Jones

Tackling 4?! Ginola has never even attempted a tackle in his life! (And don't worry; he starts off playing for Tottenham)

PC PowerPlay GOLD 91%

Category	Football management sim
Players	Eidos
Publisher	1-4
Price	
Rating	G
Available	Now

For The best football management sim by miles. Amazingly complete and up to date database, easy and functional interface.

Against The interface does look a little dated, you can't set individual tasks for players, and does take a fair while to load initially (really, really long time).

Need Win 95/DOS, 486 DX4/100, 16Mb RAM, 2XCD, a love of football.

Want P133, 64Mb RAM

NUCLEAR STRIKE

How's your day been then? Too much and too big to deal with epic games? Just want to do some harm and see some nice explosions? You want Nuclear Strike.

GUNS 1178
RKTS 35
MSSL 7
WING 5

FUEL 89
ARMR 1423
LOAD 0
TRIES 2

You big Dhor...

It's French, an adventure, and against all odds, damn good!

The United Nations Security Council has failed once again. An emergency meeting scheduled for dealing with the theft of a nuclear device by a madman, slowly transformed into a heated debate over whether green or blue chairs should be used during the meeting. It was decided to adjourn proceedings until a secondary committee could examine this grave seating problem. Forget the U.N. Once again it's time to prove the theory that a man, his helicopter gunship and some very stylish sunglasses were born to be tools of international diplomacy.

This world on the brink plotline would be familiar to most gamers that have played at least one of EA's successful Strike series. From Desert and Jungle Strike on the Megadrive right through to Soviet Strike, taking on evil dictator number 457 has always been the order of the day. Guiding your helicopter around large landscapes, hunting down mission objectives and watching lots of things blow up was never too far down the list of "Had a bad day, need stress relief now" things to do. Nuclear Strike not only continues this fine heritage but is the best of the series so far.

Megadeath from above

During the game, many vehicles need to be commandeered in the name of all that is good and victorious. The helicopter is always maintained as old faithful, although this helicopter is best described as The Grim Reaper with rotor blades. From sweet looking solitary seagulls to the mightiest building in North Korea, nothing is safe from your numerous sidewinder missiles, chain-guns and the like. While

death from above is well and good, the M1 Tank is a true boys toy. Slipping into Tonka Truck mode, I managed to demolish an entire military base by just ramming into buildings, blowing up ammo dumps and generally being a crazed loon. Immature, since it was my own base, but you had to be there. Harrier Jump Jets, hover craft and the like also gain the seal of approval.

Nuclear Strike is a bulls-eye in satisfying pyromaniacs, but be warned it's dead hard. Constant enemy firing, fuel and ammo running dry are always constant dangers. Real thought is needed at times in how to approach an enemy encampment. The first campaign takes place in the jungles of South East Asia, but soon moves on to a drug lord's island base, North Korea and on to deep Siberia. Only the first scenario is best labelled as moderately easy, the rest are sweat inducing. The highlight is taking part in the protection of the South Korean forces during a North Korean invasion. Strafe advancing tank columns, hunt enemy commandos and even the odd bit of ordering ground forces around the battlefield. The tide of the entire battle rests with your actions.

Big, silly fun

With all this good wholesome fun, why do we have to put up with a totally crap save game feature? I'm sure Playstation owners have been secretly indoctrinated into accepting the old save only at the end of five missions pain in the behind, but we PC

owners want to save when and where we want to. OK end of the soapbox rant and any real complaints about this game. A superior blast-a-thon that can be tackled as a tough mission based campaign, or just when you're in a silly mood and need to make things explode in delightful ways. It's been done before, but Nuclear Strike just does such a good job of it.

Pete Sharpe

+ Plus

www.strike-net.com

85%

Category	Hauling ass in a helicopter
Players	1
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Price	G8+
Rating	$89.95
Available	Now

For	Graphics (especially with 3DFX) don't let the side down. Variety in play due to many different environments and weapons/vehicles.
Against	Limited save game feature grrr. Anything less than a 4 button joystick, equates to sucky controls.
Need	P133, 16Mb RAM, WIN95.
Want	P166, 32Mb RAM, 3DFX card.

3D NATIVE 3DFX VOODOO/RUSH SUPPORTED ONLY. GLIDE 2.42 INCLUDED WITH GAME.

MAGESLAYER

The Quake engine is a versatile thing isn't it. Fast 3D, pretty textures and now... Top down!

Mageslayer is one of those 'great sounding ideas' that doesn't quite work as well as it might have. It is a pretty good idea though, and when I heard what it was about I was quite excited at the prospect of securing the game for review. Sadly, Mageslayer doesn't quite live up to its potential, which is a pity because it could have been really good rather than just 'quite fun' when multiplayed.

A bit repetitive...

As simple and repetitive as it was, Gauntlet was great fun at the arcades, especially when four friends were gathered around the machine frantically pressing buttons, screaming for help, and cursing companions when they mistakenly took a chunk out of their bodies. As far as top down shoot-em-up come RPG's go, few have done it better than Gauntlet (Take No Prisoners, reviewed last issue is one that probably qualifies) and though Mageslayer is very similar to Gauntlet, it doesn't quite reach the same 'fun' quotient because of fairly repetitive gameplay. It is yet another game that makes use of the incredibly versatile Quake engine, so graphically it's quite good (save for the monsters which are pretty boring to look at) - and also is compatible with 3Dfx boards and looks very pretty

www.ravensoft.com/mage

It uses the Quake engine, but it's not 'top down Quake', it's not that good

at 640x480x16bpp.

There is a storyline that accompanies Mageslayer, but there's no real need to go into it in any great detail. Suffice to say that 'in the ages past' there were some mages that got a little too much power on their hands, and as we all know power corrupts. So all the normal people were kept under the mages thumbs as slaves or cannon fodder, which didn't make the normal people very happy at all. Centuries of slaughter ensued, with the mages finally being defeated by the elite soldiers of the normal people, called Mageslayers. Then one of their own, Lore Thane, turned to the dark side and tried to take control of the world by harvesting

the power of the 'StarStones'. So once again it's time for war, and the best Mageslayer from each clan has been chosen to try and defeat bad old Lore Thane.

Scantily clad Inquisitor

There are 4 character classes to choose from, each with different strengths and weaknesses. The Warlock, obviously, has powerful spells but isn't the best at hand to hand combat, and the Inquisitor is kind of like Fred Nile's wet dream. She runs around scantily clad armed with a cross through which she channels her powers and throws out holy bolts of vengeance from the lord (or something). The Arch-Demon's a nasty looking creature, big on strength but not the fastest creature around, and the EarthLord is a dwarven sort of character. He's short, powerfully built, and carries a really big hammer with which he whacks the baddies and thumps the ground to create a mini-earthquake as a special attack.

The characters do have different abilities, but during the

game play tends to fall into a fairly monotonous regimen. There are a few different monsters with different attacks, but nearly always the best option is to back into a corner and wait for them to make suicidal rushes at you, so you can pick them off at your leisure. Also, the viewing perspective doesn't change - so when you're moving south you've actually got to press keys to move in the opposite direction, which can become very confusing. Other than that, Mageslayer is quite a 'good' game, but nothing special. Playing with 2-4 players (co-op) is as always lots more fun, but still, it could have been so much better had the monsters been more entertaining and different, and the maps been a little less linear. It's still quite good fun for a little while though.

Gareth Jones

64%

Category	Top down shooter
Players	1-4(TCP/IP, IPX, Modem, Serial
Publisher	GT Interactive
Price	$TBA
Rating	TBA
Available	Now
For	A good idea, uses the Quake engine, and may well bring back memories of Gauntlet-ing fun
Against	Fairly linear and sometimes monotonous gameplay, not very much variety in the monsters, and the static viewing perspective makes things difficult.
Need	P90, Win '95, 2xCD
Want	P133, 4xCD, 3Dfx

3D 3DFX OPENGL

Ⓜ Madden 98

CATEGORY	Sports
PLAYERS	1-2 Network, Modem
PUBLISHER	EA Sports
PRICE	$TBA
RATING	G
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P133, 16Mb RAM, WIN95.
WANT	P200, 32Mb RAM

overall

81%

Not as sexy as other EA Sports titles, but for Madden fans it's a touchdown.

It's that time of the year again when we receive the update to the thinking man's football game, although it is played by a bunch of wussies covered in padding and skin tight pants. No more jabs at Gridiron, I'm sure our League players would find it tough memorizing a 50 page play book. Oh yes indeed.

EA Sport games are renowned for receiving graphic overhauls between each yearly edition. Strangely though, Madden 98 lags way behind the likes of NHL and FIFA 98. The players are still sprite based and even the stadium looks a bit so so. Madden fans have a right to be peeved by the lack of technology progress in the graphics department. The big upgrade is in the form of "Liquid AI", sounds a bit wanky I know, but it allows for more flexibility in the computer's playing style. Changing plays on the fly to match any given situation. All well and good I'm sure, and there's little doubt that I was keenly flogged by the AI on most occasions. The other major bonus is another CD with LOTS of play and team analysis by Madden himself. NFL junkies will love this stuff, time to curl up with a box of popcorn and watch Mr. Guru visually explain each set play. The gameplay will be welcomed by Madden veterans, with play calls easily accessed (thank goodness, because there are a tonne of them) and a four button gamepad handling all the sprinting, long passes etc quite well.

Madden 98 is a quality title, but stands apart from other EA Sports games. Its playing style is not as arcade based as say NHL 98. Even if you've never watched a hockey or basketball game in your life you can still enjoy the EA Sports equivalents because they are great action titles. Madden is aimed squarely at the fan, and at that it succeeds. The lack of any basic tutorials, and tactical gameplay keep it firmly out of the reach of non-American football fans though.

Pete Sharpe

Play computer games for too long and your brains turn to mush. That's "Liquid AI", that is

3D MADDEN 98 IS PATCHED WITH NATIVE VOODOO ONLY (NOT RUSH) SUPPORT THROUGH GLIDE

NBA Live 98

CATEGORY	Sports
PLAYERS	1-8 net, modem, LAN
PUBLISHER	EA Sports
PRICE	$TBA
RATING	G
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P100, 16Mb RAM, WIN95.
WANT	P166, 32Mb RAM, 3DFX card.

overall

88%

Not a revolution, but NBA Live98 is the Rolls Royce of Basketball games.

While NBA Live 97 was the usual classy effort by EA Sports, the main problem was its radical approach to graphics. The texturing method used was pretty rough, with most players looking like an extra from an Evil Dead flick. It looked bad with the main side effect being spot the polygon when players all grouped together clambering for the ball. This time around the player graphics are crisper and much more distinctive leading to a better view of the action.

As with all previous efforts by EA Sports, NBA 98 sports so many options and stats that it borders on being a fetish. Full editing of teams, players and rules is available for the Basketball perfectionist. The new options include the Superstar difficulty level and the interesting "Lock" player mode. This allows you to step into the shoes of your favourite player for an entire match. Being a bit of a patriot I took control of Luc Longley the huge Aussie center that plays for the Chicago Bulls. Watching the Bulls lineup perform around me, while just concentrating on playing Longley was a nice change from the usual take control of whoever is nearest the ball.

If you have a fancy-pants ten button gamepad then joy is yours to behold. Call up plays instantly, fancy pivots and all sorts of dribbles and special dunking moves are just a fingertip away. A four button gamepad lets you do all the basics comfortably, and still makes for a great level of playability. For Basketball fans this is THE B-ball experience on the PC. The shooting, passing and on the court action feels just right and is very hard to fault. Well except

One thing you have to admire about the NBA Live series is the craftsmanship that goes into the polished wooden floorboards

for the computer rarely fouling. EA Sports have acknowledged this problem, and a patch is in the works. NBA Live 99 is going to have a big job ahead improving on this.

Peter Sharpe

3D NBA LIVE 98 IS NATIVE VOODOO AND VOODOO RUSH SUPPORT THROUGH GLIDE ALTHOUGH NON-ACCELERATED MODES DON'T SUFFER TOO BADLY IN COMPARISON.
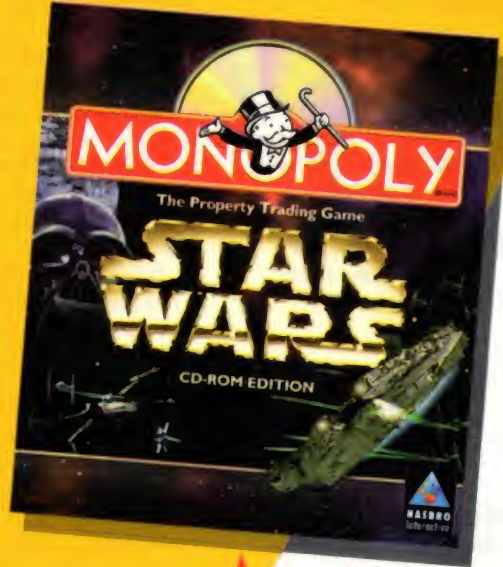
Flying Corps Gold

CATEGORY	Chess
PLAYERS	1-8
PUBLISHER	Rowan
PRICE	$69.95
RATING	G
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	Win 95, P100 and 16 MB RAM.
WANT	P166 with 32 MB RAM and a 3Dfx Card.

overall
74%

If you liked feel of the original game, this one will be a winner for you.

Flying Corps has been re-released as Flying Corps Gold (FGC) and now sports Multiplayer Support and a Mission Editor. Still no Random Mission Generator, but the Mission Editor is reasonable. A fourth Campaign has been added, and the Fokker D-VII and French Spad are now available as aircraft selection options, putting eight Allied and German planes at your disposal during quick action, and up to six as you progress through the campaigns.

Many people criticised the original game because it offered realistic flight characteristics, ie tail heavy aircraft that you always had to battle with to stay in the air, and the ever present threat of turning into a death spiral. This version gives significantly more options, enabling you to turn off these pesky things and fly in Easy Mode, enable translucent smoke, and even supports force feedback sticks like the CH Force FX stick.

3D support has been added via Direct 3D and 3Dfx Cards, and this adds to the game in terms of explosive effects. It's real nice to watch your opponent fire-ball on down in buckets of flame, through the clouds, to a thumping ground explosion. But overall 3D has not improved the ground graphics markedly; they are a bit blurry, and objects seem quite small and hard to define until you are very close. What is has done however, is increase the frame rate enabling very smooth flight.

If you are interested in WWI sims and can't wait for Red Baron II, this will whet your appetite. The Historic FMV and reference material included with the game are worth the money.

Maj. Ian Lindgren

(top) Beautiful, yes. But also a fraction less flimsy than balsa, and very flammable... (see below)

MIB

CATEGORY	Action
PLAYERS	1
PUBLISHER	Gremlin
PRICE	$TBA
RATING	TBA
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	Win 95, P100, 16Mb RAM, 4XCD
WANT	That'll do nicely.

overall
78%

A predictable, low risk effort from the developers.

Gee, not another licensed movie-game. Hands up all those people out there that have gone to see a movie, thought it was great, then rushed out to buy the game as soon as they release it. Unfortunately, the game is either A) crap B) boring and repetitive C) a mindless waste of valuable programming talent or D) all of the above.

MIB is, cleverly enough, not one of these games. It isn't a crap game. It isn't boring or repetitive. It isn't really a mindless waste of valuable programming talent. But it also doesn't quite hit the spot. For instance, when you first start out, you, as Will Smith, are in a building chasing a suspected burglar. So you walk down the hall, open the door and hear a bleeping sound. Looking around in vain, searching for this bleeping, you stumble across a bad guy. You beat him to death with all of your LAPD skills, then look for the bleep. It seems to be emanating from a bomb. You try in vain to disable the bomb, watching a timer count down. Then you mistakenly press the button at the wrong time and the bomb

explodes. You die. You then have to repeat this same incident over and over, until you get it right.

This is the main problem in MIB. You end up having to save the game every time you walk into a new room. Now, maybe it's just me, but that gets very annoying. One step too many will send you falling to your doom (a common death), even though you didn't see the hole. A baddie just appearing out of nowhere, with a huge gun. Aaaarrrrgghh!!! It's a platformer all over again, only in 3D.

Now that I've complained, let me praise. The scenery is great, with everything finely detailed. Everything is in 3D, with great scenery interaction. You get a choice of three MiB agents to be. You need to think logically to work out the puzzles (not for the console orientated, in other words). It has great controls, on par with Twinsen's for ease of use. It has all the charms and quirks of the film, with the characters making "funny" quotes every

time you do something. And boy does it have great animations.

But all of these good points fail to make up for the fact that MIB is a very, very annoying game. It is guaranteed to make you hit yourself in the head from anger, but hey, if you just can't get enough of the whole MIB thing...

Josh Stubbings
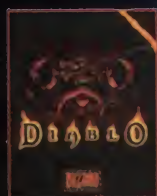
Not much more than eye candy? That'd make it a perfect MIB movie translation then...

Ⓜ Combat Chess

CATEGORY	Chess
PLAYERS	1-2 TCP/IP, Network & modem
PUBLISHER	Empire
PRICE	$TBA
RATING	G8+
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P75, 16Mb RAM, WIN95.
WANT	P100, 4 x CD-RO

overall
70%

Chess with spectacular graphics, Combat Chess gets the job done.

Victory in a Chess game is usually a sombre affair. Handshaking, a bit of post match commentary that sort of thing. It's all a facade really. Inside the victor lies a dormant urge to pick up the opponent's king, pour kerosene over it and light a match. Followed with chants of "Your king is dead sucker haha". This behaviour will get you thrown out of most Chess clubs, and isn't practical if you're the owner of the pieces in question. Relief is at hand. Combat Chess allows for not only the impaling of the losing side's king, but a whole host of animated characters performing unspeakable acts to each other across the board.

This isn't the first animated Chess game, but Combat Chess is certainly one of the best looking. The characters are all styled in a fantasy/gothic theme and are all very individualistic. The black Death Knights are all decked out with fear in mind, with lots of breathing smoke and death by stabbing. The white Bishop will imprison enemies in a forcefield, before execution by vaporization. From the Rook's farting, to the black Queen's maiden of pain portrayal, each piece has many entertaining death rituals. Problem is that all this eye candy also presents itself as the game's biggest fault. Big pieces block out the view of pawns, and by mid game things resemble peak hour at down town fantasy land. After the novelty of the graphics wore off, I ended up looking more at the little 2D Chess window, and less and less at the animated battles. Sort of defeats the purpose of beautiful graphics when they

Soon to be released: the fully rendered, neo-Gothic update of Connect 4

impede the player's perspective.

Stricken of my usual winning strategy of picking thy nose to distract an opponent, the Combat Chess engine beat me quite soundly. Nose pickings aside, I'm a pretty decent Chess player and the toughest AI setting posed a daunting challenge. While options such as timed games, and pretty graphics are nice I still find myself going back to Sierra's Power Chess (reviewed issue 10) as it offers more features and a more personalized computer opponent.

Pete Sharpe

Evidence

CATEGORY	Adventure
PLAYERS	1
PUBLISHER	Microids
PRICE	$TBA
RATING	TBA
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P75, 8Mb RAM, DOS
WANT	Nothing special.

overall
49%

Watching re-runs of Murder She wrote, or playing this? Evidence wins in a photo finish.

Adventure gaming can be a great experience. Engrossing storylines, original characters and puzzles that tease rather than inhabiting the realms of insanity. Adventure games done wrong however are a blight upon humanity. Look for the following indicators. Plot endings that can be predicted before tearing the shrink-wrap off the box. Character conversations that have you slumping immediately into a coma over your keyboard. Then there is everyone's favourite. Puzzles that frustrate to the point of transforming you into a howling beast that roams the night looking to destroy anything related to puzzles, from Crosswords to Wheel of Fortune contestants. Evidence leans dangerously close at times to many of these cardinal sins.

Your ex-lover Sarah Jenkins, investigative reporter number one has been murdered. This is only the beginning of your bad day. Soon enough the police place you on the most likely suspect list, none of your friends want to know you and then it

becomes apparent a corrupt politician is tied in with the murder. The setting is the seedy side of some American city. You know the sort of place. It's perpetually night time and nobody lives there except for cliched characters purpose built for a murder mystery. Standard adventure fare so far, but I started grumbling early on. Polygon actors that show no sign of personality or interesting character traits inhabit the game. On top of this bland pre-rendered locations seen though a first person perspective make up the locations, but the graphics are letterboxed into a small viewing area. Not good for encouraging player interest in the plot.

The killer feature involves sitting through sequences over and over again, if you don't solve a puzzle correctly. Learn to love the police chief as he asks you the same questions dozens of times, if you don't find a way past constable plod early in the game. A particular joy was getting thrown out by hospital security nearly fifty times (literally). I will label that fist sized hole in
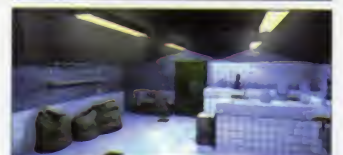
AARRGHH! Puzzles! Where are Inspector Wexford/ Inspector Morse/Inspector Gadget when you need them?

the wall next to my PC, with the name "Evidence was here". Catchy isn't it? I'm being a bit harsh, and Evidence does offer some variety in play, such as action sequences and an evolving storyline but compared to Tex Murphy and his brethren this detective yarn falls way short.

Pete Sharpe

Jonah Lomu Rugby

CATEGORY	Rugby Union Sim
PLAYERS	1-??
PUBLISHER	Code Masters
PRICE	$TBA
RATING	TBA
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	486/66, 8Mb RAM, 2 x CD
WANT	P120, 16Mb RAM, 4 x CD, gamepad.

overall
45%

A console port, and not a very good one either. Field is very cramped, and control is poorly implemented.

Consoles are good for a few things, and the simplistic arcade sport sim is one of the areas in which console's excel. The only problem with this is the dreaded console port - just because games that look and play ok to kiddies on their TV doesn't necessarily mean that they'll work on the PC. And JLR doesn't really work. It looks very average, and the gameplay is nothing to write home about either.

But for what it is (and in it's favour it doesn't pretend to be anything else), JLR isn't a terrible game, just not a very good one. The coverage of teams is comprehensive, with 32 nations available (including all the majors as well as lesser nations like Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe), and all the players have skill attributes in different areas. In terms of gameplay though, JLR is a kind of hit and miss affair. The game is run at a fairly hectic speed, the playing area isn't especially large, and there's 30 players on the field at the same time it can sometimes be very hard to tell just what's
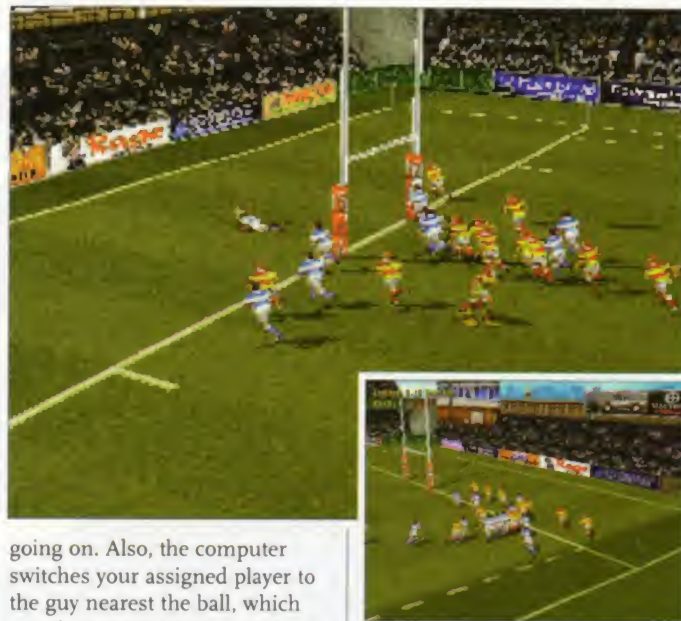
going on. Also, the computer switches your assigned player to the guy nearest the ball, which can change once every couple of seconds - and makes it even harder to organise your team.

On the positive side though, once you get the hang of the control, things become a little easier, and it can get a little exciting at times. Rucks and positional kicks have been done well, and fit in to the game nicely.

Console schmonsole! We're used to much better, both in graphics & gameplay

However, this is still not much more than a middle of the road arcade rugby console port, and while it might offer a little bit of entertainment for while, don't expect anything more.

Gareth Jones

Puma World Football 98

CATEGORY	Arcade football sim
PLAYERS	1-8
PUBLISHER	Ubisoft
PRICE	$79.95
RATING	G8+
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P90, 2XCD ROM, 16Mb RAM
WANT	P133, 4XCD, 32 MB RAM

overall
33%

An arcade game which has some very nice options and features, but is terrible in the gameplay department. Even if you like simplistic console style arcade football games, there's better ones available.

Flight sims attempt to accurately simulate piloting millions of dollars worth of inaccessible aviation equipment. Football sims attempt to accurately simulate kicking a ball around in a park.

It'd be nice to say that there's another good football sim on the market, but I can't. WF 98 is, at best, a very below average arcade football game, and that's being nice about it. Why? Well, I have to admit, it does sound good. You get 358 teams to choose from worldwide (including three Australian teams), 5 different modes to play (league, tournament, friendly, and so on), 3 levels of difficulty, up to 4 players networked, action replays, fairly fluid player animation, an edit-able database, and commentary from Martin Tyler. This is all well and good, and it's really nice to be able to play as an Australian team, but

you'll notice that there wasn't anything said about the gameplay - which is because it pretty much sucks.

In fairness, it is a very console/arcade-y type game, but still the control method could have been a little more intuitive. You can't pass to a team mate, you see. You can pass in the usual 8 directions, but unless the intended recipient of the pass is standing in exactly the right position he won't get the ball, and won't try to move towards it either. Add to this how easy it is for one player to dribble the ball from one end to the other on all but the hardest difficulty level, as well as how annoyingly silly the free kick interface has been done, and you should begin to understand just what this game is about. It's not a football game, at best, it's a contest to see how well you can press buttons at certain times. Maybe console kiddies will get into it, but for anyone who's thinking of buying it because they like football, I'd strongly advise against it.

Gareth Jones

You Don't Know Jack - New Packs

DATAFLOW

⑨ **He Earns More in a Year than Some Countries**   **$3,000**

If Michael Jordan were to adopt the official name of the country Jordan, how would he be known?

1   Michael of Jordan
2   Michael of Transjordan
3   Michael of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
4   Michael of Arabia

Bill
$5,000

Fred
$1,000

John
$2,750

Yeah, the questions are weird and at first glance might appear completely nonsensical, but onece you apply the grey matter it should all become clear... sometimes

John

1   Go Ahead & Have a Cow, Man—They're Sacred
2   I See Late Night TV in Your Future
3   Don't Blink or You'll Miss It

XXXL

Yes! Jack's back in an all new version of the incredibly addictive and fantastic quiz show. Well, actually, it's not an all new version, this one is only a compendium of all three straight YDKJ releases on three separate CD's. But still, if you haven't sampled the magic that is YDKJ yet, this is a great way to get into it, and there's a total of around 2400 questions to keep you occupied.

For those that are sitting there thinking "YDKJ? What the hell is that?" it's a quiz game show type scenario, where up to three players battle it out on the same keyboard in an effort to answer questions posed to them, vaguely sort of like Sale of the Century. But only vaguely - the format may be roughly the same, but the questions are nothing like it. Instead, you're asked questions with topics like 'I'm not a God, but I am the thighmaster'. But the kicker is that the questions do make sense, they just require a bit of twisted logic to be applied, and often this is the best part. The answers, once you figure out what the question is actually asking, are often fairly straightforward. It's a very clever game that actually requires a deal of intelligence and concentration (but cleverly hides it), though a detailed knowledge of base level pop culture does come in very handy.

And then there's the host - definitely one of the highpoints of the series. The hilariously acerbic and bastardly Cookie from YDKJ

1 & 2 is, of course, included - but a pretender to his throne has taken over for the third episode and he's not nearly as good. Sure, he's still saying the same kind of things, but YDKJ veterans won't be fooled - Cookie really meant it when he was being a bastard to us, and this new guy is just an actor. But still, the whole of the three episodes together in one box is good value, and even though there's nothing new, it's well worth it if you're yet to realise that You Don't Know Jack.

Television

Arrrrgh! I suppose it had to happen, with the amount of YDKJ variants almost continually being released, but it still makes me sad to say it: This is not a good Jack, and you probably shouldn't bother buying it. Why? Well, for starters (and I realise this is mainly a cosmetic problem, but still...) - NO COOKIE! Jack devotees love Cookie. I love Cookie. Without Cookie much of the magic is gone, but if YDKJ-TV was as much fun as the others I could let this go. Unfortunately, the demons of Amero-centrism have struck once again, and unless you have an excellent working knowledge of crappy American television (that mostly isn't shown here) and American advertisements heaps of the questions will remain unanswered when you play. It's a very frustrating experience - I really wanted to like this, because there's few things better than a nice afternoon of Jack in the office with work-mates (and a few drinks), but there's really no point to playing YDKJ-TV. Sure, not all of the questions will be completely alien to Australians, but many will - too many to make playing it a fun experience.

Dance E-Jay

E-Jay, I guess, is a play on EJ. EJ, which, I assume, stands for electronic jockey. Electronic Jockey, I gather, is a play on Disc Jockey. EJ, most likely, because Dance E Jay is a program to help you assemble electronic music. Nineties dance music. Still with me? Not sure whether Dance EJ is testament to the sheer brilliance of the developers of this program, or testament to the ease with which a bearable dance track is made (I suspect the latter), I spent a little over 2 minutes creating my first few moments of music history. With over 1000 samples to play with, ranging from Bass, Loops, Voice, Effect, Drum, Sequence, Xtra, Rap and Wave, I manage to squeeze in a sample of each. The end result is good. My upper

body seems to swing with the beat. I haven't even read the manual. Damn this is easy!

Dance EJ is a fun little program to play with on a rainy day, but not much else. Using a tile format, you construct a song by placing visual representations of the many categorised sounds onto an eight-track template. It's really dead easy. Those 1000

samples included are comprehensive, but not comprehensive enough. You can import your own wav files to increase the variety of sound in your music, but that's about it. There's little else to Dance EJ. You can't change the tempo nor pitch of the sounds. That's the most frustrating. It's simply a pretty visual tile arranger that happens to play back

stuff to you.

Nice for those with no idea where to start making music, just not powerful enough to get you creating some original music.

March Stepnik

---

living in a DanceMachine 4 *

taste love 1*

Yo DJ, spin that hard drive! Be cool! Knock out a funky tune in a couple of spare minutes & sit back as record co. scouts & attractive members of the opposite sex bang on the door. In theory

Orgy	Big Orgy

Here I am 01	Don't care 01

Clap 01 L

High Whobble R

Sightings UFOpedia

Self evident truth #14569 - If the aliens really are out there, they probably have much more important things to do than making crop circles. Like feeding Elvis, for instance...

Was it an ancient race of highly intelligent aliens that probed the barn of Beckie-May's manure farm back in the Summer of 1954?

Cue sinister music.

Did they take off in a long cigar-shaped object and leave obvious tell tale signs all over the place, yet nothing concrete and conclusive of their visit?

Raise sinister music an octave.

Or was it a case of Becki-May drinking too much of the home-made cider stored in the basement and believing cousin Randall's claim that he was going to show her the stars?

Cue drums.

Well, don't look to us for any answers. As if hosting a one hour show filled with such incongruous bullshit is going to provide you with any answers to the great question of "is their life out there?". We'll tack together some interesting ideas,

throw in some crappy re-enactments, and top it all off with a huge amount of hearsay evidence and rake in the ratings. Green lighting and violins, as we've noticed, seems to help.

Our CD is a collection of all the great stories from the show, presented in hyper linked format so that you browse through our non-information with ease. For viewing pleasure, we've basked screens with dull lighting and the occasional green hue. The Government Conspiracy Theory is back in fashion, so if you click to the left, you'll notice a comprehensive collection of what the government isn't doing. To the right is a database of many other possible alien and UFO sightings. If you manage to exhaust this list (we get a lot of sitcom writers commending us on its richness), it is possible to connect to the Internet and update the list. Surprisingly, we get vast amounts

of electronic mail asking us to find out the telephone number of the persons that supply our Sighters with their drugs. The reason for this interest, is perhaps, the greatest mystery.

Our most popular section is the Ufology guide. Here you get a database of information of all things spooky, from Roswell, to the Hale-Bopp cult, and even the phenomenal successes of shows such as ours.

No, we won't give you answers. We may open your mind a little, if needed. In keeping with the brilliance of our show, this CD-ROM will raise some questions. Unlike our show however, the CD version of Sightings does well in providing you with an illusion of intelligence. Come, sit back. Suspend your disbelief, allow yourself to be baffled by bullshit, and above all, have some fun.

Cue credits.

March Stepnik
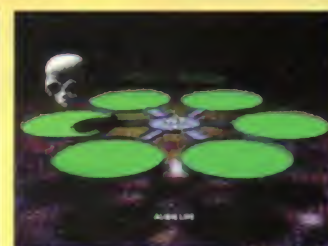
LEGEND

Performance Technology

LEGEND *Video Accelerators*

NEW

LEGEND 3DFX

The answer for those users demanding the ultimate in arcade and console gaming graphics!

Designed to operate with your existing video accelerator the LEGEND 3DFX pass-through card provides affordable, full screen 3D rendering with all the latest, leading edge 3D features.

LEGEND 3DV

This is the card for aggressive 3D gaming.

The LEGEND 3DV provides 3D features and incorporates premium 2D performance. Engineered for both 2D and 3D performance.

LEGEND 3DDelta

A 3D graphic accelerator for the next generation of 3D games and committed 3D CAD users.

The LEGEND 3D Delta has been engineered for professional 3D graphic environments. A fully featured product encompassing premium 3D performance with all the leading 3D technologies.

LEGEND 64MiTV tuner

The LEGEND 64Mi is a complete TV tuner, capture and TV output multimedia graphic solution.

- Input from conventional TV antenna, satelite TV, VCR or camera
- Television display on your monitor in a window or full screen
- Still and motion video capture and playback saving to your hard drive
- Video output to composite and s-video televisions
- Audio output to your sound card

LEGEND 128T6

The LEGEND 128T6 is a multi award winning graphic accelerator card, providing premier performance levels.

Designed for superior 2D graphic performance the LEGEND 128T6 is ideal for CAD, graphic design applications and serious gamers who demand the highest performance levels.

LEGEND 64Mi+

The LEGEND 64Mi+ provides superior performance at entry level prices levels.

Targeted at price stressed integrators without compromising performance, manufacturing quality or driver support.

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EDITOR'S CHOICE — Aug '96 LEGEND 128

TRULY AMAZING — Dec '96 LEGEND 128

Canopus Pure 3D

Which video card is better: Apocalypse 5D or Diamond Viper V330?

I recently brought a copy of your PC Powerplay Hot Hardware Guide, and I saw that the Apocalypse 5D won the "PC Powerplay Ultimate Hardware Award " for video cards with a Powerbench 2D of 52.0645 and Powerbench 3D of 57.7751.

With this information in hand, I was thinking of purchasing one, until I went to Diamond's home page where I saw the Diamond Viper V330. The Diamond Viper V330 had a 3D benchmark of 228.0 and a 2D benchmark of 140.0. Now I'm wondering which card is more powerful and better to buy?

Matthew Hill

Firstly Matthew, it is important that you understand what a benchmark is. There is not only one scoring system. As per the introduction in the Hot Hardware Guide, the Powerbench is a scoring system that we have developed in-house. Previously we would list a series of benchmarks for people to examine and draw conclusions from. What happened though, was many readers wrote in saying that they found all the numbers confusing and wanted an across the board scoring system, which is what we did. I sat down and carefully examined all the tests we were using to identify the good and bad points of a video card and went about devising a benchmarking system.

Initially I had programmed a single number scoring system, like the other benchmarks use, but I found that it didn't really point out any flaws that could be found in hardware, say as in the Rendition make of cards. What I did then was revise the mathematics so that a card could be rated in terms of 2D performance and 3D performance. Scoring systems with huge numbers tend to leave too many big gaps between cards, so I worked out the algorithms to create a scoring system that kept cards in the double

digits. The day a card hits 100's in a Powerbench will be a day worth remembering as that will be a damn fast card.

Ultimately, the Powerbench system takes in data from a series of 2D benchmarking programs and 3D benchmarking programs and generates a score. The overall Powerbench (as you clever folk will already know) is just an average of the 2D and 3D score. So, to initially answer your question, the scores on the Diamond page are totally irrelevant to our Powerbench system.

That said though, we reviewed the Riva just last month and the score it received was a 2D of 55.6833 and a 3D of 74.2239 for an overall Powerbench of 64.9536. The Riva is currently our highest scoring combo card, however as per the review in 3D technews last month, its colour system leaves a lot to be desired. Very dithery, it hasn't got the clean feel of either a 3Dfx or PowerVR rendered scene.

Which one to buy then? As I am currently in the same position as yourself, I'll be going for the Apocalypse 5D. Despite the Riva's blistering speed, the 5D still has the advantage of PowerSGL which drives games such as Ultimate Race, one of the best games I've ever played. With it's vibrant colours and max resolution of 1024 x 768 with virtually no performance drop the Apocalypse 5D is a great card.

However, were you to go with this decision, it's virtually a must to get a 3Dfx as well. As the PowerVR lacks translucency, to play games such as G-Police the 3Dfx is a must. My Personal choice is the Apoc5D/3Dfx combo. However, as the Riva can do translucency in its own grainy way it's the cheapest solution. On a side note, and just to muddy the waters further, the Diamond Stealth II S220 (with the Rendition v2100) has all the colour of a 3Dfx but at twice the speed and has translucency. The 2D side of things, especially in 320 x 200 DOS is abysmal but this is one impressive card and the best overall solution.

Canopus are a confusing company. If you're the owner of the PC PowerPlay Hot Hardware Guide then by quickly turning to page 36, you can see that the Canopus Total 3D benchmarked at the very bottom of all the other cards reviewed. Even slower then some 1Mb cards. You can of course imagine the cynicism abounding when the Pure 3D, their entry into the 3Dfx market landed on our desks.

Boy were we wrong! The Canopus Pure 3D with a Powerbench of 57.2331 benchmarks faster then all the other 3Dfx's we tested by quite a considerable amount. The reason for the speed increase? Canopus have upped the texture memory from 2Mb to 4Mb. What this effectively does is take some load off the bus as more and larger textures can be stored in its own memory without a need for swapping. Not only that but this also alleviates a lot of processor intensive memory management.

Despite the nice speed increase, you would expect a host of extra features to be available to the 3dfx owner with double the texture memory. Sadly there isn't. We went through every 3Dfx title and Direct 3D application we could in the desperate hope to run something at 800 x 600 for the 3Dfx. None would. As we discovered, it doesn't work that way. 3Dfx's are comprised of 2 separate memory entities. The first is the frame buffer, this is what gives you your resolution. On all 3Dfx's including the Pure 3D, it is only 2Mb therefore limiting you to a maximum resolution of 800 x 600, but only if the scene isn't too complex. We lived, we learnt.

This isn't a setback though, not a single 3Dfx owner out there has ever been caught complaining about the most oft used 640 x 480 resolution of their card, especially from the quality the 3Dfx brings. The enhancement a 4Mb texture buffer delivers anyway can clearly make up for any shortfall. Firstly, the speed increase is delightful. If you've ever played Wipeout 2097 or Formula 1 by Psygnosis you'd know that they were the only

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BENCHTEST: CANOPUS PURE 3D

Ease of installation: Good
Included Software: None
Price: $399.00

Powerbench 3Dfx: 57.2331

Comparison

	3Dfx
Fastest card: Orchid Righteous	53.0548
Slowest card: Maxi	49.1931
Canopus Pure 3D:	57.2331

The Pure 3D now takes the lead as the fastest 3Dfx

EA's Longbow 2 is a prime example of cutting-edge programming for the 3Dfx. It's a stunner

3Dfx games to offer occasional slight jerkiness. It wasn't detracting, but on the occasion it occurred, it was noticeable. Imagine our delight then whilst on our misconceived journey of higher resolution seeking to notice that these known offenders were performing remarkably better. In the case of Wipeout 2097 all forms of stutter was gone and Formula 1 only had the occasional small stutter. Indeed things were performing faster.

The future looks even brighter for the Pure 3D as it ships with its own enhanced Direct3D and Glide drivers to take advantage of its increased texture memory. One game that we are all salivating over that will have 4Mb support for the Pure 3D built in is Longbow 2. Sadly we didn't have a copy of Longbow 2 available for comparison, but as soon as we do, we will document the improvements in 3DTech News.

920 X 960 ON YOUR TV!

Revolutionary little additions to the Pure 3D don't stop there though. Another particularly nice feature of the card is its ability to output to a TV. This might seem like a form of regression but if you have a large enough TV then Quake, Turok or Wing Commander Prophecy can take on a whole new dimension. The Pure 3D even supports Super VHS output and for those with capable TV's, a maximum resolution of 920 x 960 is possible. Windows desktop support is also included for TV output, but only if your TV has NTSC support (which most modern ones do). If you have an older TV with no plans of upgrading, the Canopus can still output full screen games in PAL. Best of all, unlike other TV pass through cards, the Pure 3D worked first time, looked fantastic and was painless to install.

Overall the Canopus Pure 3D is the cream of the 3Dfx crop. It offers the most functionality, the fastest speed and for $399 is only a little more expensive then

the cheaper 3Dfx's. The only unanswered question remaining however is if you have a standard 3Dfx, should you upgrade to the Pure 3D. I can't really answer that one for you, but I can tell you that the ground breaking Voodoo 2 is due soon this year and the issue of that upgrade rears its ugly head. My suggestion would be to try and sell your old 3Dfx and if successful, get a Pure 3D. Otherwise, wait for the Voodoo 2. If however you haven't bought a 3Dfx yet, what are you waiting for? The Pure 3D is the one.

Matrox M3D

The Matrox M3D, is as curiously named, as it is built. Were

Matrox trying to capitalise on the slang term for the Diamond M3D (Monster 3D), or were they just out of ideas? You have to wonder because the M3D is just a PowerVR2. Sure, there are 3Dfx clones, but the M3D is so identical to the Apocalypse 3Dx that it all starts to become quite bewildering.

Whatever their motives, it's always great to get my hands on another Power VR product. The colours so rich and vibrant and the promise of new software shipped on CD always manages to rekindle a PowerVR passion. The Matrox, however, failed to deliver a spark. It's not for any kind of lack, it's just that it's identical to the other PowerVR2's reviewed. Ultim@te Race plays the same, as do the PowerVR2 demos.

To go over it briefly, the PowerVR2 is a 3D accelerating chipset created by NEC and

Videologic. The PowerVR2 is unique in its design over other accelerators in its ability to do more raytracing based functions such as dynamic light objects and real time shadows. Where other accelerators go for the specular, or overall lighting, the PowerVR products opt to create a more realistic environment.

The PowerVR2 chipset also has the best colour palette over any of the other accelerators. It renders objects on the fly with a quality akin to that of a 3D Studio Render, only in real-time. Using 24 bit colour and its ability to manipulate very large textures very quickly, PowerVR2 rendered scenes always look exceptionally vibrant and with true light sourcing, much more realistic.

Overall, the Matrox M3D is a PowerVR2 stand-alone plug-in accelerator, and for that reason isn't really a suggested buy. As we have printed many times before, a PowerVR2 accelerator is a great product, as long as you have a 3Dfx to bridge compatibility issues. As the M3D is a single slot card, it would require the use of an extra slot in your PC. The best solution is still an Apocalypse 5D with its powerful 2D and PowerVR2 3D abilities. If however you have the perfect 2D card and are after a PowerVR2 accelerator, the Matrox M3D benchmarking a fraction higher then the other PowerVR2's is a worthy addition to your PC.

BENCHTEST: MATROX M3D

Ease of Installation: Good
Included Software: None
Price: $230

Powerbench 3D: 58.2934

Comparison

	3D
Fastest card: Videologic 3Dx (PowerVR2)	57.7751
Slowest card: Apocalypse 3D (PowerVR2)	49.9404
Matrox M3D:	58.2934

The M3D now takes the lead as the fastest PowerVR2 plug in card.

Diamond Stealth II S220

What do you call a video card that has all the colour perfection of a 3Dfx but runs at twice the speed? Ready for a shock? It's the new Rendition V2100 chip. We've seen the benchmarks, heard the gossip but in the case of this new Rendition chipset, seeing really is believing.

Before the raving starts though, let's at least get the technical specs out of the way. The V2100 is basically a lower cost version of the Rendition V2200. The differences between the 2200 and the 2100 are only in added video functionality. The 2200 includes a dedicated input port that can be used to bring MPEG2 video, video conferencing images, and other video information into the accelerator for processing and display. Further, the V2200 supports software DVD implementations by providing hardware assistance to the MPEG2 decode process. The 2100 offers only video playback of MPEG 1 without TV output.

On the 3D side however, the 2100 and 2200 share the new improved super powerful 2000 based rendering engine. This includes the ability for the card to do: Anti-Aliasing, Alpha Blending, Bilinear Filtering, Gouraud Shading, Hardware Triangle, Mip Mapping, Perspective Correction, Texture Mapping, Transparency and Z-Buffering.

FASTER THAN 3DFX

I kid you not that it was a trial getting through the technical specs that I just listed for every

ounce of my being is just yearning to tell you how very fast the V2100 is, and it's VERY fast. Yes, there is a seeming contradiction here. Looking at the benchmarks, you could assume and rate this card only slightly faster then a 3Dfx or slower then the PowerVR2 on the Apocalypse 5D. Let me assure you now that this is not the case. Whether it be the current revision of the drivers or the very real possibility that the card maxed out some of the benchmarking apps, the V2100 is most definitely much faster then the 3Dfx.

Having just installed Wipeout 2097 for our Pure 3D test it was the first DirectX application we brought up to put the V2100 to the test. Nothing can prepare you for what you will see. The colours are vibrant alive and essentially identical in every way to that of the 3Dfx, even the translucency which no other card has gotten right. The speed however is what gets you. As you start to accelerate in your Wipeout vehicle it speeds up, and up, and just keeps on going. The phenomenal rate this was going at was ludicrous. So fast was Wipeout 2097 that it was actually almost unplayable. Ever put a golden oldie on your Pentium and watched the action fly around at such extraordinary rates that you couldn't play it? Well, that's what the V2100 was doing to Wipeout 2097. We turned engine trails on and every conceivable texture to try and slow it down - it didn't. Switching to in-"car" view was a mistake. The track moved round at such an incredible pace that you felt very woosy.

In the end, we actually had to increase the resolution to 800 x 600 just to try and slow it down to play it. At 800 x 600 though it was still much faster then anything else we've ever played,

EVER. It was terrifying, it was wonderment it was "I have got to get me one of these".

UNSTOPPABLY FAST

Being the cynic that I am, I had to try and find a weakness in this card any way I could. Loading up a new Direct 3D demo lying around called X, it was ideal because being in beta, all the debugging options could be modified to turn functions on and off. After spending 3 hours tweaking every Hardware Accelerated option there was I was not only convinced that the V2100 could mimic every function of the 3Dfx, but that it could do it faster. In the comparative shots I've made of one of the most processor intensive scenes from X, the frame rate has the V2100 only 2 fps faster then the 3Dfx. This is a testament to the 3Dfx, however it should be noted that the Pure 3D was used. A conventional 3Dfx dropped right down to about 12-14 fps. Ultimately, where the Pure 3D could be seen stuttering over the number and complexity of objects in the scene the V2100 was much smoother. Likewise, when the scene was less complex, the V2100 would jump up to 75 frames a second where the 3Dfx would only hit 58.

MPEG on the 2100 is also extremely satisfying. Firing up a copy of Independence Day it was definitely better then the V1000 series, but just missing from the speed of a dedicated MPEG hardware accelerator. If video is your thing though, best wait for the V2200 and its DVD/MPEG2 playback abilities. (I'm salivating just thinking of the 2200 now).

Rendition Dos STILL too slow

There is a downside though. Rendition just can't seem to get their Dos support together. The absolutely appalling 320 x 200

support that caused many an older game to not function on the V1000 is still ever present on the V2100. Achieving a Dos vgabench of 11 when other cards average 120 is abysmal. SVGA support is super fast however, and most modern games are DirectX (which does work 320 x 200/400) making the flaw easier to live with. The only other gripe which may only be particular to the Diamond V2100 is the lack of software based centring. For those without a digital monitor every res change will mean dial fiddling to re-centre your screen.

I was burned by Rendition badly in 96 by the V1000 based 3D Blaster. Besides giving it a rave review in the December issue, I went out and bought one. 2 months later the 3Dfx came out and eclipsed the V1000 making it look less then ordinary. Seeing is believing though and the V2100 is just so very fast. Actually, there is just cause for a program to slow it down, Cyber Gladiators (a V1000 show-stopping game) ran so quick, it wasn't just comical, it was unplayable. The V2100 is currently the only video card that could be purchased as a true all in one. You won't be able to play 3Dfx only titles on it, but the Direct 3D ones will look equally as good as the 3Dfx but just so much faster. If you're not really into MPEG2/DVD the Diamond Stealth S220 is the one to buy, otherwise wait for a 2200 card to come out. There's 3 contenders now. It's 3Dfx vs PowerVR2 vs the Rendition V2000 series. Currently, the V2000 series is a clear winner.

BENCHTEST: DIAMOND STEALTH S220

Ease of Installation: Good
Included Software: None
Price: $259

Powerbench 3D: 54.4853
Powerbench 2D: 52.4086
Powerbench Overall: 53.446

Comparison

	3D
Fastest card: Apocalypse 5D	54.9197
Slowest card: Canopus Total 3D (Rendition V1000)	26.0708
Diamond Stealth S220:	53.446

(below) Longbow 2 showing off its night time effects.
(left and below) X. This exciting space sim will run beautifully on 3Dfx & Rendition V2100/V2200 cards
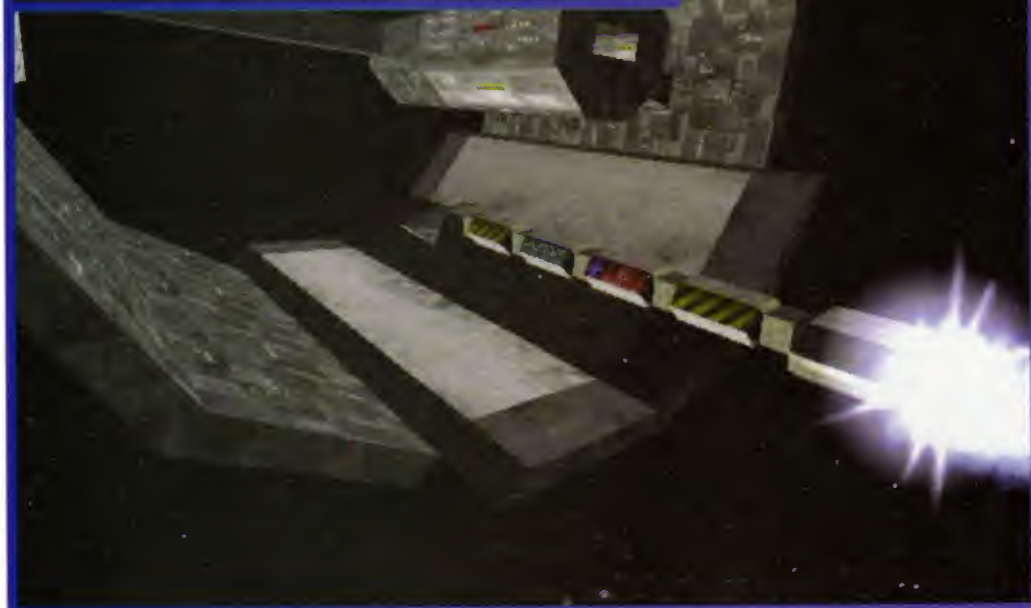
3D GAMES

X

Besides making for a great real world benchmark to pit 3D accelerators against each other, X by German game designers Egosoft looks set to revolutionise the 3D - action - space - strategy - simulation - shoot - 'em - up game.

In X you will take the seat of a space ship pilot at the beginning of his career. After years and years of dreaming about leaving his home planet in a distant corner of the argon empire, working in all the most horrible jobs to save money, he/you can finally can afford the latest and hottest space-jet around.

After learning the handling of this great piece of modern Argon technology, the gates of the argon shipyard are left far behind as a whole universe of possible things to do is opened before you.

Sounding a lot like a super enhanced Elite, you can trade by docking at a space-station, buying some goods and searching for another sector to sell it at a higher price. With your hyperspace-drive you can jump from sector to sector, and even come

Egosoft are adding, X looks to be everything every other Elite clone tried to be, but failed.

Oh, and what does X stand for? Well according to the developers, - XTRA-ORDINARY, X-PLOSIONS, X-PLORE OUTER SPACE, X-TERMINATE, X-TREME ACTION.

Test Drive 4

The accelerated version will be included on next months cover CD. Test Drive 4 for the 3Dfx is an impressive looking title with all the elements of the original Test Drives. Civilians drive on the same road as you do and high speed chases with police are even more exciting then previous versions. TD4 for the 3Dfx looked similar to Need for Speed Special Edition but lacked some of the more advanced effects. Where the rain in NFS2SE leaves little splats over your windscreen the rain in TD4 tends to be much less wet. Currently TD4 has a 3Dfx version with a Direct 3D version to be announced.

Wing Commander Prophecy Test

Included on this months cover CD is the absolutely incredible 3Dfx test of Wing Commander Prophecy. Wing Commander has never looked so amazing, with massive battle cruisers, coloured lighting effects and the most brilliant shockwave when an enemy is destroyed. Playability was the main aim behind Wing Commander 5 and the 3Dfx test just oozed it. Enemies buzzed around you and Dolby Surround sound weapons fire emerges from everywhere. Utilising the 3Dfx's ability to playback animated textures, the Video of other pilots is smooth and very clear. Even though it's just a test, it's easy to prophecy that Wing Commander 5 will be a hit and create a new standard by which all other 3D games will be compared.

close to the borders of the Argon empire. Visit distant civilisations, and while there, sell them what they need, and buy what they have in large amounts.

Sounding a lot more like Elite, within the game you can buy whatever weapons, shields, rockets and other gimmicks the universe has to offer. Moving onto a bit dab of Privateer. If you prefer fighting, you can collect bounties on wanted criminals or help governments to clear their sectors from enemy ships, i.e. as a Mercenary. Sounding nothing at all like Elite, you can start your own factories, mines and plants in space. Sell your own products and make even more money then Bill Gates.

And now for the clue as to the real culmination goal of the game. "Maybe one day the now unknown fighter pilot from an insignificant little world at the border of the Argon empire will play the leading role in the fight against the evil Xenon, and write his name into the book of history".

The screenshots taken from what we used to demonstrate the abilities of the V2100 all run at an alarmingly fast rate on both the Rendition V2100 and the 3Dfx. Elite was one of the most enjoyable games there is and with the 3D enhancements and other new functions

(above) X again. Like Elite, but NEW & with full 3D hardware acceleration. That line between cut-scene and in-game is getting more blurry...

How to handle V2?

With the Voodoo 2 very near, many developers are trying new techniques to handle the extra power 3Dfx's latest wonder. The Messiah engine from Shiny is a good example. The character engine will create a model complexity depending on a target frame-rate. Thus if you're running it through software, you'd get 500 polygons a second with the Voodoo 2

A new game engine from KAGE

Terminal Reality the people who made MS CART Precision Racing is working on another game-engine, called "KAGE". Some features are:

The most realistic lighting and shadows ever seen in a 3D game. KAGE uses very high-quality radiosity techniques — far better than anything you've seen in a real time environment on your PC. 3D hardware support with generic drivers (like OpenGL and D3D) but also many low-level APIs are also supported for various popular cards to allow the best performance, and the most choices to the users.

Longbow 2

The spotlight in this month's 3DTech News definitely goes to Jane's Combat Simulations Longbow 2. Featuring an all-new graphics engine and a host of innovative new multi-player features, Longbow 2 is very exciting news to the combat sim enthusiast.

The boasted all-new graphics engine includes dynamic lighting and four times the object and terrain detail of its predecessor. Specific 3Dfx accelerator support is also included, plus a 4Mb texture memory version suitable for the Canopus Pure 3D.

One of the most amazing effects within Longbow 2 are the Photo-realistic night vision effects that have been generated. No combat sim has ever looked this amazing before and from checking out the screenshots, it looks like the immersion factor within this game will be very high.

Expect a full review in PC Powerplay next issue. In next month's 3D Technews we will be doing a breakdown and comparison of the 3Dfx standard version versus the Pure 3D 4Mb Version. For now, be mesmerised by the screenshots, incredible aren't they.

Jere Lawrence

Longbow 2. With screenshots like these, can you blame us for showing you so many?
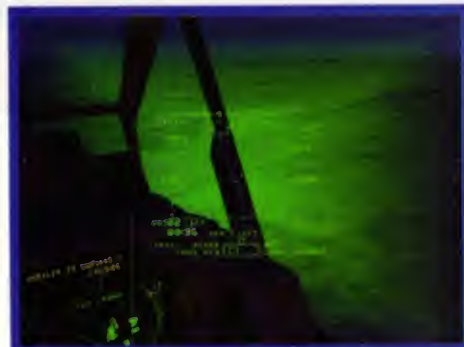
you'd get 5,000 polygons. Engines need to take this into account and automatically adjust their detail.

Scalability in both polygon count and fill-rate is 3Dfx's primary message to the development community right now. A technique currently being used by developers is tessellation which bumps up the polygon count but really only makes lighting look better by taking the same model and breaking it into more faces. 3Dfx have suggested to developers instead that they'd rather see a higher res model that could morph between poly levels or such.

1998, GAMING HEAVEN?

The Comdex hardware trade show

Gary Wallis

Every year, computer freaks from all over the world flock to the city of Las Vegas. They come here for one reason and one reason alone, to witness the future and see next year's hot hi-tech gear. There was an enormous amount of product announcements at this year's Comdex. Companies that are not even attending Comdex have made numerous announcements, it must be the time of the year.

New game to use AMD's 3D extensions

The AMD K63D processor will be AMD's first CPU to include the new AMD-3D instruction extensions. Which DreamWorks Interactive's new game 'Trespasser' will take advantage of to accelerate its 3D graphics. Trespasser is the based on "The Lost World: Jurassic Park" movie and will be a first person action game in the QUAKE/DOOM genre. But according to Glenn Entis of DreamWorks Interactive "Trespasser takes first person, 3D gaming to the next level". In Trespasser you are on the Site B Island of Jurassic Park and must survive the dinosaur-infested landscape and try to escape. This game will support an improved Physics model, which will provide a world with incredibly realistic dinosaurs and objects. The game will be one of the first ever to feature a full outdoor environment with around 15 square kilometers of explorable terrain! I can't wait to see just how much performance these new AMD-3D instructions can provide, we'll certainly keep you posted.

THE FIC PA-2012 APOLLO VP3 BASED MOTHERBOARD.
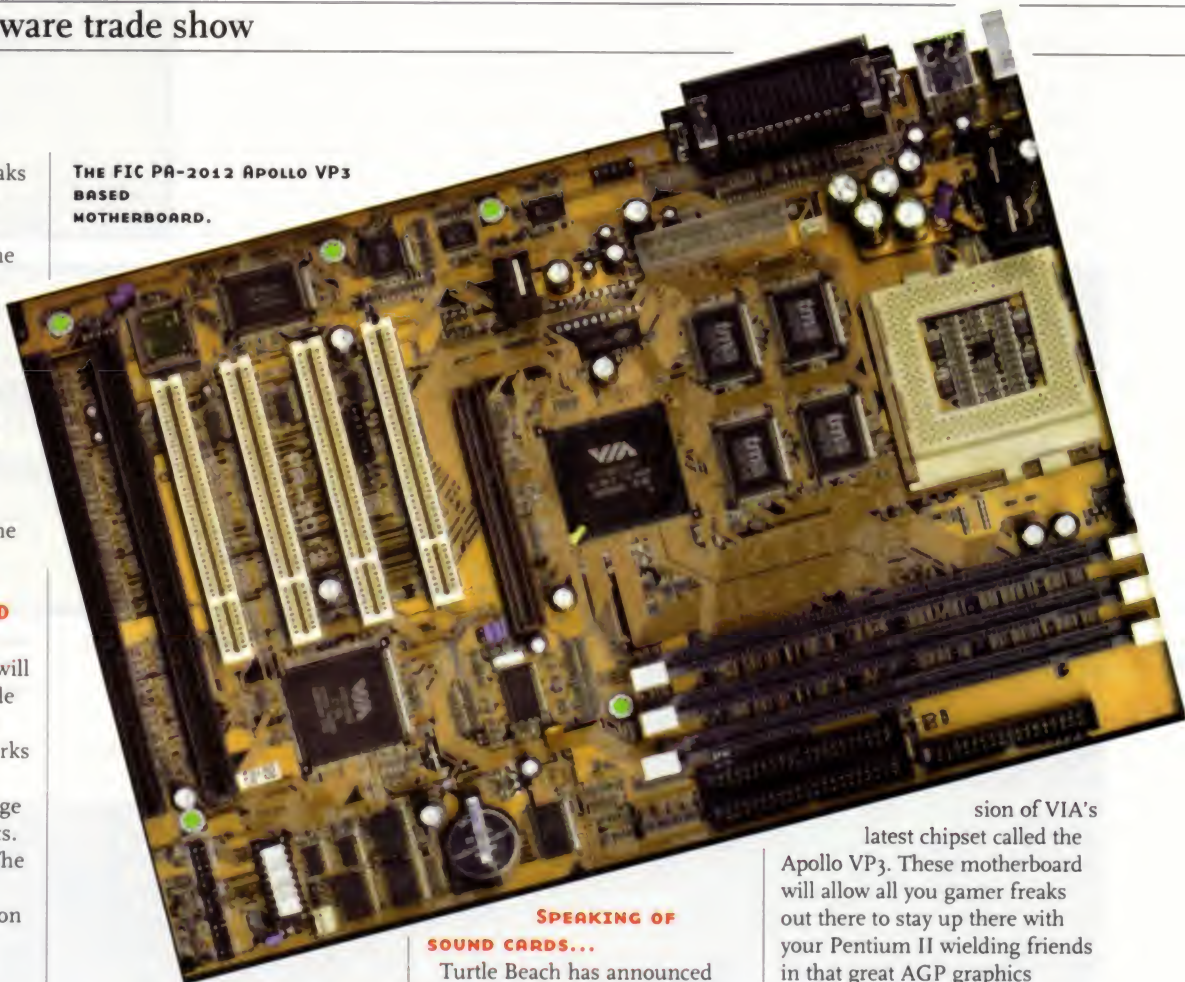
SoundBlaster on PCI

Creative Labs announced the impending release of the SoundBlaster AWE64D (Digital) PCI sound card. OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturers) customers are currently sampling the card as I type. The new EMU AWE64 PCI chip will allow OEM's to build SoundBlaster technology into their own products. These include clone SoundBlaster compatible sound cards or for integration onto motherboards, which should mean high quality sound as standard. If the AWE64D becomes common place in all PC's just think of what the games creators could do with the in game sound effects and music.

Speaking of sound cards...

Turtle Beach has announced they have a new low cost sound card called the Malibu Surround 64. This sound card will sell for under $100US, and will feature SRS 3D surround sound, 4MB of wavetable samples. Sounds like a good deal to me.

The First Socket 7 AGP motherboard...

You should see these boards out by the time you read this, which are to be released by a number of OEM motherboard manufacturers. FIC are one of the first ones off the block with their PA-2012 motherboard which is available now as to are ABIT with their VP5 motherboard. What makes these motherboard so special is the inclu-sion of VIA's latest chipset called the Apollo VP3. These motherboard will allow all you gamer freaks out there to stay up there with your Pentium II wielding friends in that great AGP graphics adapter race we are all sure to take part in. The VIA Apollo VP3 chipset not only offers AGP but also comes equipped with a satisfying 1MB of pipeline Burst SRAM level 2 cache and support for as much as 384MB of SDRAM memory. VIA have also pledged that they will also release the VP3 chipset in a 100MHz-bus speed version very soon.

...With 100MHz Bus speed

News about the FIC PA-2012 was quickly followed by news of ABIT's proposed new mother-board the IT5A. Based on the new Ali Aladdin V chipset developed by Acer Labs Incorporated (Ali). The Aladdin V will be the first chipset to officially support

A SNEAK PEAK AT THE AMD K7 PROCESSOR. HMM, INTERESTING...IT'S LOOKING A LOT LIKE THE PENTIUM II...
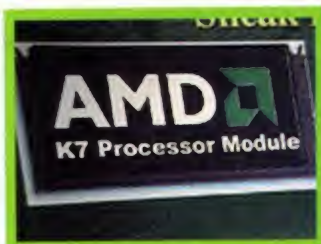
100MHz-bus speed operation. This board will absolutely fly, coupled with an AMD K6+ 3D running from a 100MHz bus speed at 400MHz will give anything Intel comes up with a run for it's money.

PENTIUM PRO MMX OVERDRIVE

A source close to Intel has revealed plans for an MMX enhanced Pentium Pro overdrive CPU upgrade. This will bring a smile to the face of all the people who invested their hard-earned cash on the Pentium Pro only to find that Intel was abandoning the socket 8 architecture. This upgrade will mean Pentium Pro owners have a way of keeping up with the Pentium II owners and maybe even surpassing them. Theoretically a Pentium Pro with the same architectural enhancements as a Pentium II will outperform it at a similar clock speed. This is due to the fact the Pentium Pro's second level cache memory is built in and runs at processor speed. The Pentium II runs at only half the processor

clock, although this will change when the Deschute CPU is released along with the 440BX AGPset. The Pentium Pro MMX could be a very good option for all those people with a socket 8 motherboard and seemingly no upgrade path except to slot 1.

DESCHUTE MAYBE SOONER THAN WE THINK!

The release dates for the Deschute and the 440BX chipset has been rumored to have been brought forward. So we may be lucky and get to see Deschute

BLOODY HELL!! THIS IS TRESPASSER, UTILISING THE NEW AMD-3D INSTRUCTION EXTENSIONS

systems released sometime in the 1st quarter of 1998.

CHEAPER PENTIUM II

A version of the Pentium II is soon to be released soon in a low cost version, minus its level 2 cache. This is supposed to get more people to adopt Intel's 'slot 1' architecture quicker. A Pentium II with no 2nd level cache would perform very badly on a standard 'slot 1' motherboard. But what if the motherboard sported Intel's 440BX chipset, which operates on a 100MHz-system bus speed. Well, it will be very interesting to see the speed of these cache-less Pentium II CPU's. You never know, as 100MHz-memory bandwidth may provide enough for a Pentium II to survive without its level 2 cache.

NATIONAL SEMICONDUCTOR AND CYRIX MERGER FINALIZED – PENTIUM II'S FROM CYRIX?

The deal between National semiconductor and Cyrix has been signed which means Cyrix is now part and parcel of National Semiconductor. Although Cyrix will still remain a separate entity to NS, but will benefit from all of National Semiconductors contacts. What is really interesting about this merger is the fact that National

Semiconductor has an extensive cross-licensing deal with Intel. This will effectively give Cyrix the ability to produce Pentium II class CPU's, if it so desires. Which could finally break Intel's current Pentium II and slot 1 monopoly. According to sources there is no other semiconductor company that has the ability to obtain a license to produce Pentium II style CPU's. This should prove to be very interesting indeed.

X Y AND Z

A company called Techmedia has announced details of their new game controller called the 3DZoneMaster. This device is made for 3D gaming, it is a wireless Ultrasonic Positioning Device (UPD) which will give the joystick the ability to move in all 3 dimensions. This device will provide full 3D motion tracking and a fully programmable interface to give the user ultimate control in all three of the dimensions. Well that certainly is a better way to move in the 3rd dimension, I can't wait to get my hands on one of these controllers!

GIVE ME MORE...

It is starting to look very much like 1998 will be the year gaming hits new heights. With the impending release of the 100MHz system boards, the AMD K63D, Intel's 440BX chipset and the Pentium II (Deschute) gamers will have a wider choice when decided the system to buy. It just waits to be seen whether AMD's new CPU's live up to expectation, I am sure the Deschute will certainly be a screamer. Any of the new motherboards and CPU's coupled with the new Voodoo2 3D card will bring very high resolution 3D games to the awaiting masses. All I can say is roll on 1998.

ENSONIQ
Audio PCI

PCI sound cards that make use of system RAM - the way of the future

T he new Ensoniq Audio PCI is the latest offering by the Ensoniq corporation renown for their high quality musical instruments. The AudioPCI is a wavetable/MIDI music card that is PCI, promising faster audio in games and less processor load therefore ensuring for a better overall gaming experience.
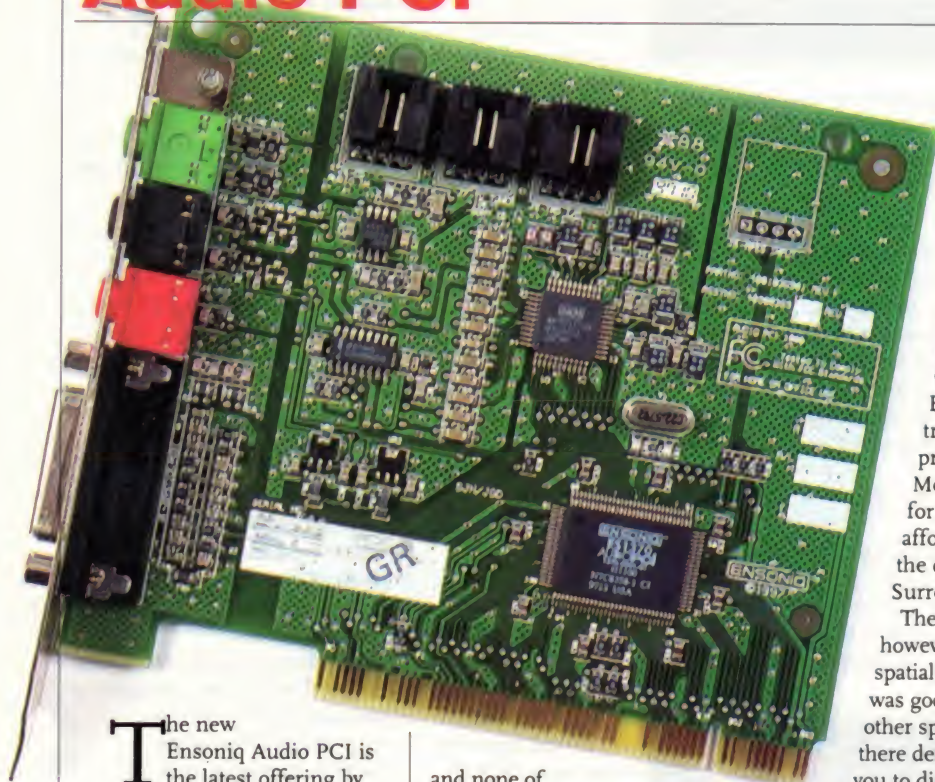
There are some very unique features to the Audio PCI that do allow it to stand above the crowd. Firstly its MIDI ability is not stored in ROM, something obvious by the small size of the card. Instead it takes advantage of the PCI bus and uses system RAM to hold the MIDI sounds. Not only is this a unique method, but it reduces the overall cost of the card as well.

The card ships with 2, 4, and 8 megabyte wavetable instrument sets available from its extensive library of over 5000 sounds. The size of the bank you use would depend on how much real system memory you have, and the need for instrument quality vs memory.

As neat as this function is though, it does have to be said that the sound banks that ship with the card are absolutely awful. The brass for instance is appalling

and none of the Midi files we tested sounded right at all. In fact, compared to a 4 year old AWE32 with 8Mb memory and only a 4Mb sound bank loaded, the Ensoniq sounded decidedly sick. Chalk one up for Creative and EMU.

Ensuring compatibility with the older legacy sound cards, the Ensoniq employs legacy software to function as if the ISA signals are present, however the Audio PCI can do the operation at the full speed of the PCI bus. Compatibility to Ensoniq has been of primary importance as they believe that no sound card can succeed in the marketplace without the ability to play all existing software. The added bonus the Audio PCI's means of compatibility offers though is that everything runs at PCI speed. These techniques employed by Audio PCI are so unique that Ensoniq has applied for a patent on the process.

Surround Sound

Although the Ensoniq Audio PCI can Support Surround sound, the option was not present on the card we had. Instead, you have to buy the AudioPCI S5016 add-in for support for four

speaker surround sound. Obviously Ensoniq are just trying to keep the price down, but the Monster Sound 3D for example at an affordable price has the quad digital Surround built in. The Ensoniq does however support A3D spatial sound. The effect was good and like all the other spatialisers out there definitely allowed you to discern left from right very easily.

Realistically though, the Creative SBS 80 speakers create a very similar spatial affect and they work on any sound card. Sound distance however was distinctly better with the forsaken demo (having A3D support) showing off the 3D quality of the card. You could definitely discern a ship off in the distance clearly. Shame it was only utilising 2 speakers.

In this world of Windows 95 and compatibility that we now live in, the sound card is the first and most successful of the transparent device. Due to the many Windows drivers out there, the headaches of compatibility are long gone. It really is a case of just plugging in the sound card and knowing it will work with all your Win 95 games.

In fact, with the compatibility issue out of the way, a sound card is a sound card. From a wavetable point of view, they all sound the same. Midi differs vastly based on quality and Sound font, but very few if any games use midi anymore opting for CD Soundtracks instead. With this in mind, the only reason you would rush out and buy a new sound card was if it had

digital 4 speaker sound (such as the monster 3D). Considering the Audio PCI doesn't, it's just another sound card, albeit with some A3D spatial enhancements (that can be pretty much reproduced by a good set of 3D speakers) and a clever means of Midi playback. For more info call *Electric Factory on 03 9480 5988*

Diamond Multimedia LVD Ultra2 SCSI Adaptor

Small Computer Systems Interface (SCSI) is great. We love SCSI. SCSI is fast - very very fast. Ultra2 SCSI is even better, it's the newest standard for the I/O protocol, and makes use of 'Low Voltage Differential' (LVD) signalling technology. If only SCSI wasn't so expensive, there'd be nary a gamer anywhere that didn't make use of it, just because it's so sexy and cool. Unfortunately, the high cost of SCSI adaptors and devices has meant that it's mainly high-end servers and the like that use SCSI. But if you've got the spare cash, it's well worth it, especially now that Ultra2 is taking off.

How does data transfer rates of up to 80MB/s sound to you? Pretty damn impressive huh? Yes indeed, and for those of you lucky enough to already own SCSI devices, Diamond's FirePort 80 adaptor is also backwards compatible, meaning it supports both Single Ended (SE) and LVD SCSI devices on the one BUS. It's compatible with SCSI-1, SCSI-2, SCSI-3 and Ultra2 protocols, and supports the most popular FastSCSI and UltraSCSI SE devices, features a full 32-it PCI DMA Bus Master interface with support for 5.5v and 3.3v slots, and supports Windows 95/NT and Novell Netware. In English, all that means is that the FirePort 80 LV kit is bloody fast, compatible with almost everything SCSI, and though you'll pay a premium price for the privilege of ownership it's well worth it This thing of speed and beauty is new, but should be becoming available as you read this. Enquiries to Chips and Bits on 039 696 1911.

ATi
Expert@Work 4MB
PCI 2D/3D Video Card

ATi's latest combo card provides a good compromise between price and performance

Yes, it's yet another 2D/3D video card that promises blindingly fast 2D with hardcore 3D acceleration to rival a dedicated 3D card. But ATI, despite releasing a rather troubled first generation 2D/3D card, seem to have gotten their act together, and this card is not bad at all.

Firstly, it is designed for business, or SOHO's and the like (hence the name of the card), so it's not a hard core gaming card. Depending on your situation though, it does provide some decent 3D effects along with decent 2D performance. The 4MB version allows for desktops up to 1600 x 1200 (though only in 256 colours), or up to 1152 x 864 in 32-bit true colour, and features 64-bit acceleration, 100MHz SGRAM, and a 230MHz DAC. In terms of 3D features, the XPERT@Work makes use of ATI's 64-bit 3D 'RAGE PRO' accelerator, and is capable of such things as a triangle setup engine, a 4kb texture cache, texture decompression, edge anti-aliasing, and both bilinear and trilinear filtering. So, obviously, it isn't going to outperform a 3Dfx card in the 3D department, but as a combined 2D/3D card, you could do a lot worse. Also there's a decent selection of software available with the card, which includes a graphics program from Vream called WIRL, MGI's Photosuite SE, Micrografx's Simply 3D, and a sampler CD full of QT movies and cool graphicky things. All up, a good combination that won't put dedicated 3D cards out of business, but a decent compromise nonetheless. The ATI XPERT@Work 4MB version runs at $399 (r.r.p.) and more information can be obtained from BBF Components on 039 7614299.

The handy little toolbar icon for the ATi cards
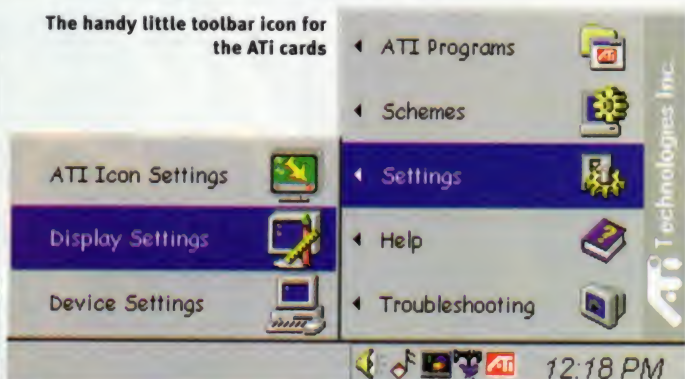
MICROSOFT
Precision Pro

As with most of the recent batch of Microsoft games, this new joystick is a compromise design. Looking neither like a high-end, military inspired megaphallus, or a plain and simple multipurpose "does everything badly" generic job, the new Sidewinder Precision Pro fits bang in the middle. This is a good thing for many, as most gamers use just the one stick to do all jobs.

This is Microsoft's second (of their new gaming era) generation stick. It's a far more ergonomic proposition than its predecessor, as a result is feels great in hand. It's even perfectly usable by those outcast freaks and modern lepers of society - left handers! Fully featured too, is the new Precision Pro. The 8 buttons can effectively operate as 16 via the innovative Shift button which sits under your thumb. Nice. The 8-way hat switch is sharp and precise, as it the smoothly gliding throttle. The Pro also features the now almost standard handle twist for rudder controls, and all input signals make their way to your joystick port via a fully digital system, ensuring accuracy and no need for recalibration after initial installation. The user-programmable software too is excellent, it's fast and easy to use and comes with 30 presets for existing games. It's a pleasing advance over the horrible original Sidewinder. RRP is $129.00 check it out, recommended.

PHOTO: CHRIS ELFES

TO PLAY GAMES CONSTANTLY OR NOT TO PLAY GAMES CONSTANTLY? THAT IS THE QUESTION

Setup
PC PowerPlay
78 Renwick st.
Redfern
NSW 2016
setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

WHEN YOU WRITE, REMEMBER TO INCLUDE AS MUCH PERTINENT INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE. SEND YOUR CONFIG.SYS AND AUTOEXEC.BAT AND ANY ASSOCIATED *.INI FILES FOR WINDOWS THAT MIGHT TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR PROBLEM. GIVE ME AS DETAILED AN EXPLANATION AS YOU CAN AND BE SURE TO INCLUDE AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE ABOUT YOUR PC. FEEL FREE TO EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS OR, IF YOU WANT TO SNAIL MAIL OR BETTER STILL, PLEASE REMEMBER TO WRITE CLEARLY OR BETTER STILL, PRINT YOUR LETTERS. PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO THE VOLUME OF MESSAGES WE RECEIVE, WE CANNOT GUARANTEE A RESPONSE TO YOUR QUERIES.

MORE RAM, PLEASE!

>q Hello people at the most legendary mag on earth!

I'm stuck with 8Mb RAM, and to play most good games these days you need at least 16Mb RAM. To upgrade my computer to this much I'm up about $200-$400 bucks. Is there anyway I can boost up my RAM without having to spend a lot of dough? Also, are there any RAM doubler software programs on the market?
Thanks,
Brett Novak
Winthrop, WA

>a Good question but you're going to hate my answer.

You can't really boost your RAM without spending money, but you can make more

THIS IS WHERE YOU'LL FIND WHAT'S USING WHAT. SEE RANDOM ACCESS

efficient use of your RAM by only loading what you need in both DOS and Windows 95, especially when it comes to TSRs.

There are a number of RAM doubler software programs on the market for Windows, but like drive compression software they don't give you all that much and they suck up resources. Such programs are semi-workarounds and I don't recommend them.

Hence, and this is the bit you're not going to like, there is only one way to increase your memory: buy some more. RAM is extremely cheap these days (compared to the last two years) so get some while you can.

YOU CAN NEVER GET ENOUGH

>q I have been going to upgrade my 486 for nearly three years with the sole intention of running games at their most hardcore settings i.e max resolution, max graphics detail etc.I have been twisted and tormented by new release games requiring speedy CPU's,huge amounts of RAM and 3D accelerators long enough!!,I don't need a life anymore I want 12 hr gaming sessions,jugs of caffeine and no friends.What do I buy??

Firstly I waited for the Pentium, it arrived and so did faster clock speeds and cheap RAM.I waited again,this time for MMX, it arrived and so did 3D Accelerators, I thought this was it,the best gaming platform to buy,wrong again. Now I'm informed the AGP with a Pentium II is the go.

I'm going crazy trying to keep up with every article and magazine printed on new hardware.I would like to spend around $3000 and keep my current monitor.

Does CD speed affect gameplay (I have a 4 speed) and would a SCSI hard drive warrant the cost. Should I go for the ninja 200MMX with heaps of RAM or crimp in other departments and hold out for the Pentium II avec AGP.

Please help,I'm going nuts, if I have to read another review stating "outrageous 3D, it'll blow your mind" I will flip.
Thanking you
Frustrated

>a You truly have the mark of a hard-core gamer, that attitude is spot on!

There's one very important rule when it comes to buying PC hardware: don't wait, or you'll be waiting forever.

The rate of change in the industry is astounding, and there'll always be something better just around the corner. You have to settle on what you want and buy it, regardless of wether there'll be a newer version next week, next month or next year.
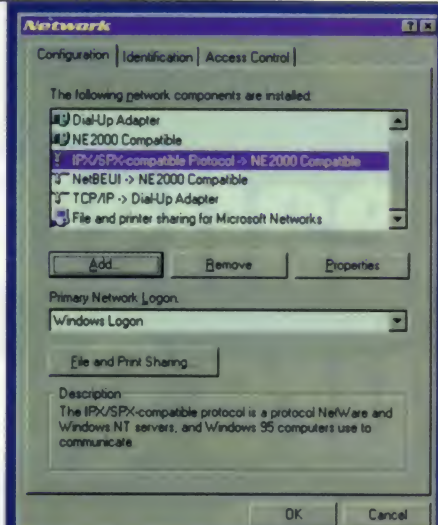
IF YOU HAVE IPX LOADED HERE, IT SHOULD WORK IN YOUR DOS BOX. SEE 'IPX IN DOS'

As for the ultimate PC, get the best you can for the money you have. By the time you read this I'd say you should be aiming for an LX motherboard with a PII. Go for an AGP card if there are good ones around (they're still a little new — wait for the technology to mature) and throw on as much RAM as you can, the best soundcard you can find and the biggest, baddest hard drive. Sounds like familiar advice? It is. There's no point recommending brand names, as it's a matter of personal preference. All you need to remember is that you get what you pay for. Is SCSI worth it? Sure is, if you can afford it. Should you get 64M of RAM or 32M? 64M, if you can afford it. Etc.

Set a target, write down each part you want and go get it.

Then spray your case black :-).

IPX IN DOS

>q I was reading your Do-It-Yourself Network article in the recent Hot Hardware Guide and have a question regarding DOS games under Windows95 with an IPX network. For games such as Grand Prix 2, do I have to go through all of the DOS related setups, (ie batch files, etc) if I am running everything straight from Windows95?
Nathan
Internet

>a Nope, you don't. Windows 95's IPX support is extended to the DOS environment beneath it. As such you can play DOS games and select 'IPX' and it should (with Windows it's always a 'should') work fine.

WHY WAIT?

>q I'm a keen subscriber with query about the amount of time WIN 95 startup/logo takes to boot.

My computer is a P133, 32meg RAM, using a Diamond Stealth 3D 2000 graphics card.

A PICTURE OF TOTAL ANNIHILATION. JUST COZ I CAN.

My problem is that the WIN 95 logo screen seems to stay on for a long time when starting the computer (about 45 seconds, only about 15 seconds of this is spent reading the HD).

I have tried removing my resident virus checker and removing the logo via the msdos.sys. Neither of this seems to speed the start up.

Is this amount of loading time normal? How can I improve the start up time. I am presently running no TSR's apart from the WIN 95 standard ones.

CURLYJ
Internet

> **>a** This is a very good question. The logo screen is basically just a cover for what's going on in DOS as Windows boots. If you elect not to boot a logo screen during startup, and you have various verbose DOS drivers being used, you'll see all their standard reports coming up instead of the logo screen. That said, the logo screen is also there as something to look at when Windows drivers are loading and initialising.

Some Windows drivers, EIDE drivers in particular, can take a long time to initialise. Depending on what EIDE controller chipset you're using, you may find that your EIDE drivers are scanning all four ports which can sometimes take, as you've described, almost a minute to do.

This is a problem common to SCSI devices as well, since all LUNs (Logical Unit Numbers) are scanned when the drivers load so they can find SCSI devices. However, with SCSI, such scanning is normally quite quick.

It's a frustrating problem that affects only a minority of chipsets, and normally only early EIDE controllers. The solution is to force the drivers to only scan the IDE ports you know to have devices attached. Unfortunately, not all EIDE drivers support

this and the mechanism to do so is different for each vendor. Check Control Panel —> System —> Device Manager and look for your EIDE controller. Note down what is listed and search the web for latest drivers and read up on any attached readme's — they should list the switches you can use.

MISSING CD-ROM

> **>q** I've got a 486 DX2/66 with only 8mb RAM and a 2x CD (which desperately needs upgrading). We recently installed a second hard drive, which is the new 'D' drive, which in Dos was the Cd-Rom drive letter. Anyway, this means that I can't install or play any of my game CD's in Dos because it doesn't recognise that the CD drive is now 'E'. Now when you try and type 'E:' in Dos it comes up with an error message saying, "Invalid drive specification".

Windows doesn't have this problem but have you tried running Duke Nukem 3d from Windows '95 with such a slow Computer? Ha, good luck!

B.James
N.S.W

> **>a** This is easily fixed. Normally when MSCDEX is loaded it will try and use the next available drive letter. This isn't always the case, however.

First ensure you're correctly loading your CD-ROM driver for your controller in your CONFIG.SYS. Given that it was working before, it should still be there.

Next you need to ensure there are enough drive letters free by setting your LASTDRIVE environment variable in your CONFIG.SYS to

Random Access

Welcome to Random Access, a column dedicated to interesting, useful and informative tips about anything and everything to do with your PC. Be it hardware, software, DOS or Windows you'll find tips and tricks listed here every month. If you have some tips of your own you'd like to share with other gamers such as yourself feel free to send your tip into Setup and, if we publish it, we'll be sure to credit and print your name.

WHAT'S USING WHAT
If you're wanting to install some new hardware and you're not sure which IRQs and DMAs you have free, open up Settings —> Control Panel —> System —> Device Manager and then double click on the 'Computer' icon itself.

Note that these don't necessarily represent all the resources your hardware is using (or trying to use) it only shows those that Windows has allocated. Generally, this should be sufficient for helping you find what resources are free for your new hardware.

GOOD OLD DOSKEY
If, like me, you find yourself dropping to the command line to do most file operations you'll find yourself, like me, sometimes cursing whenever you realise you've forgotten to load DOSKEY and your extra-long super-funky DOS command has just disappeared into the void.
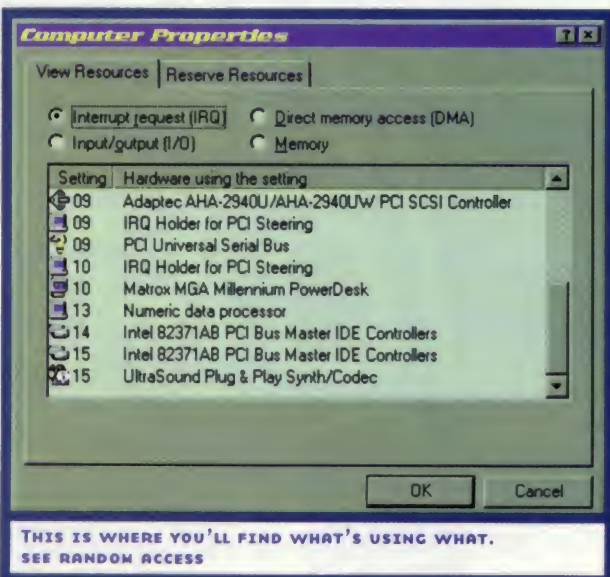
So whaddya going to do? Well if you're not already using 4DOS, you can just force DOSKEY to be loaded automatically every time you open a command prompt.

Open up Explorer and go to your Windows directory. Find DOSPRMPT.PIF, right-click on it and select Properties. Click on the Program tab and enter DOSKEY where it says 'Batch File'.

SPEED BOOSTING BOOT-UP
Ever noticed the 'Starting Windows 95...' message when you boot-up? Noticed how it sits there long enough for you to notice, making you wonder why it needs to be noticed at all?

Edit your MSDOS.SYS file and, under [Options], set BootDelay=0. The value is measured in seconds so, if you do want to see that little message, you can enter a value as high as you like. Of course, that'd make you one very strange individual.

SPEAKER SCHMEAKER
For those of us with amplifiers and big speakers (namely, all true gamers), we don't need a little yellow volume control taking up task-bar real estate.

If you find this little yellow icon annoying you can remove it by opening Settings —> Control Panel —> Multimedia and clicking on the Audio tab. In the Playback section simply un-check the 'Show volume control on the taskbar' option. Simple.

something higher. If it's not there, add it, and set it to something like 'H' (e.g. LASTDRIVE=H).

Lastly you can tell MSCDEX to give your CD-ROM a specific drive letter using the /L switch. In your AUTOEXEC.BAT edit your MSCDEX line and add /L:E to force it to be 'E:'. It should look something like this:
mscdex /d:<device> /m:16 /l:e

Take note that 'device' above corresponds to a device name given in your CONFIG.SYS by your CD-ROM driver.

THE PC POWERPLAY
DARK REIGN
STRATEGY GUIDE

JERE LAWRENCE

PART 1: FREEDOM GUARD

Dark Reign is tactical genius in a game. Perfectly balanced for both sides you never win or lose a game believing that either side had an unfair advantage. Yet, the units are so diversified! Add to that the amazing AI of Dark Reign and you're looking at a strategy masterpiece.

Journey with us now through Dark Reign as we hand out suggestions on how to complete the missions. Plus we're going to include all important strategies on how to win at multiplayer. Sigh, once I reveal all my secrets, I can kiss that high win ratio goodbye. But hey, you (the readers) are worth it.

Because there's SO MUCH to cover, we'll be running this playguide over 2 issues. This month we look at the tougher Freedom Guard missions. Next month we'll finish it off with the Imperium missions plus a pile of general tips to make your winning a regular thing.

Note: Not Every mission is solved, only the ones that will present the most problems. If you can't get to our start location of Mission 3 give up now and play Z instead.

FREEDOM GUARD MISSIONS

MISSION 3. PRISON BREAK
OBJECTIVES :
• FREE ALL PRISONERS
• BUILD UP AN ASSAULT FORCE AND LIBERATE COMMANDER RADEC
• DESTROY THE IMPERIUM PRISON COMPOUND

Start the mission by building your base at the top of the map with a number of Laser turrets across the bottom of the base for protection. This will allow you to keep your skirmish tanks behind the turrets whilst the enemy tries to invade, increasing available firepower. Don't forget to repair the turrets if they're damaged.

Once your defenses are secure, send a mixture of infantry and mercenaries up the left

hand side of the map. About half way up, you will notice a fenced in area on your right. Walk one of your units into the fenced in area to rescue the units inside. They are now under your command.

The next prison cell is at the top left of the map, with the final group at the top right which will include two Construction Rigs and a Freighter.

Sell any liberated buildings you have and use the construction rigs you receive from it to reinforce your base. Pump out the units and destroy all the buildings in the compound (you do not have to destroy the perimeter walls).

MISSION 4. TERON OCCUPATION
OBJECTIVES :
• SECURE ALL BRIDGES (BY DESTROYING THE 4 PLASMA TURRETS AT EACH CORNER) TO CONTROL ATTACK ROUTES INTO THE CITY
• PROTECT THE CIVILIAN POPULATION (WARNING - DON'T SHOOT AT ANY OF THE CIVILIANS OR THEIR BUILDINGS).
DESTROY THE IMPERIUM'S BASE IN THE CITY.

Remember that the range of a skirmish tank is greater then a plasma turret, so manoeuvre them within range to secure the bridge. Move the skirmish tanks to the southwest and destroy the plasma turret in front of the water spring and set up a water launchpad by the spring.

Build another launchpad to the north of where you started and use the freighter that came with the powerplant to collect talon from the far right side near the top.

Build laser turrets to the west of your base and expect enemy hover tanks to attack. Remember to repair your turrets while they are being attacked to allow them to last longer.

Have infantry ready to defend the base, to add to the barrage, infantry with shredder backup will attack(ouch). Keep skirmish tanks around to take out the shredders.

Once the attack has been repelled enter the enemy island from the top right bridge, go straight ahead and find a Water Spring with only one plasma turret protecting it. Just below that is one of two enemy Assembly Plants.

Continue to cross the main outer path on the island, as this will give you the Line Of Sight (LOS) from all the civilian units and buildings.

Take out ALL of the enemy plasma turrets before attacking the enemy buildings. The civilians will start helping you by shooting at enemy buildings but will get killed by any remaining enemy turrets causing you to fail the mission!

Whilst destroying the plasma turrets, blow out one of the two bridges to prevent enemy infantry from crossing it. Use Attack without moving and target the bridge itself. Shooting at enemy units on the bridge will also cause damage to the bridge. If you have long battles, eventually the bridge will be destroyed from splash damage (you can always use a Construction Rig later to rebuild the bridge if need be).

Hints:
• Build a repair facility and set the exit point to be just behind the turrets you set up. Set all Skirmish tank tolerance to LOW. They will automatically repair themselves and reform behind the turrets. Repairing costs nothing so is more advantageous.
• Build two bases, one at the Southwest and one on the East (just above where you started). Build an Assembly Plant at each location. Set the EXIT point for each Assembly Plant to be just behind the turrets guarding the base.

Quick Tips:
• If you are having a battle at one of the bases, just DOUBLE CLICK on the Assembly plant there and all tanks will exit from that building!
• Make a lot of Skirmish Tanks and use them in huge groups to take out enemy turrets, then enemy buildings.
• Set Waypoints between your two bases to easily move units from one base to the other. Click the units (or group), then select Paths, the path, then GO.
• Make several Mechanics to keep your Tanks repaired.
• Have some Skirmish Tanks patrol (using a Waypoint Path) along the coastline to pick off enemy units hiding outside the range of your turrets.

MISSION 5. KENDRICK WATER ASSAULT
OBJECTIVES :
HOLD OFF THE IMPERIUM ASSAULT LONG ENOUGH TO SAVE 30,000 CREDITS

These kinds of missions prove the importance of noting the objectives carefully. You don't actually have to have any buildings left to win this one, just the 30,000 credits. Keep this in mind while playing.

Start the mission by immediately sending your units up to the top right corner of the map. They start out spread all over and you cannot defend well in this configuration.

Next, sell a laser turret up inside your base to get the money AND a free Construction Rig(CR). Build a water launchpad by the spring, then sell the Water Launchpad that is too far away. Take the new CR you get over to the other Water Spring in the top right corner of the map and build another Water Launchpad. Sell the final Water Launchpad that is too far away and use the CR to make a turret at the choke point just below & left of your new Water Launchpad.

Within this mission, the enemy attacks mainly with tanks, so make lots of Tank Hunters in groups of 3-5 they can take out an enemy tank quickly. Set your repair center exit to be just above the choke point and set the tank damage tolerance to low.

Build two laser turrets by each new Water Launchpad and remember to repair them as they are attacked. Build another 6 Laser Turrets at the choke point into your area. Keep making money as fast as possible, use all the freighters that are mining Talon to carry water instead.

Once you reach 25,000 credits sell off everything except a power generator to get all the extra money you need to finish the mission.
Unscrupulous tactic # 1: Build two extra Water Launchpads right next to the Water Springs and instead of blocking everything up with the new freighters, park them in front of your Laser Turrets. This way they will be fired upon first, and will run away behind the turrets pulling in the enemy units with them.

Quick Tips:
•Build a Hospital and some Medics with Behaviour set to Pursue so that they run around healing the infantry.
•Phase a group of Mercenaries in front of your

What's the one key to victory in Dark Reign, either in single or multiplay? Repairing, that's what!

laser turrets. When enemy units stop there to attack, unphase them and blow away the enemy units.
•Don't let the Tank Hunters act on their own (they go bonkers sometimes and get wiped out). Make them a tactical group and order the group to attack one enemy tank at a time. They will take out the enemy very quickly in this manner.
•Enemy Tachyon Tanks are not stopped by your Laser Turrets since they have a greater firing range. A group of Spider Bikes can be used to attack the Tachyon Tanks, or alternatively a few Tank Hunters.
•Create Medics to heal your mercenaries and make a formation of mercenaries in front and a row of Medics behind. Set their Independence to LOW so they do not break formation. When the tanks come they'll be torn to bits.

MISSION 6. INFILTRATION ON MALIK
OBJECTIVES:
•USE YOUR INFILTRATOR TO STEAL THE PLANS FOR THE HOVER FREIGHTER
•DESTROY THE HOVER RESEARCH FACILITY

Morphing and phasing are the greatest tools of the freedom guard and a brilliant addition to Real time Strategy. Just remember that you can morph into more then just trees. Your infiltrator can become an enemy infantry unit so that you can enter his base without detection.

The most reliable model for your infiltrator can be found by building a bridge across the river to the left and down from your base. This is the hover facility with some Bions guarding it. Use these as the your model. To get LOS to the Bions carefully manoeuvre scouts close to the base between foliage so that they can see the enemy unit, but in turn can't be seen.

To morph, select the Infiltrator out of the enemy's Line Of Sight (LOS), and press "I" to get the morph cursor. Click on the enemy infantry to morph into it. Enter the enemy's Headquarters (HQ), Training Facility or Assembly Plant to steal plans for buildings and units. Once you've obtained the plans, eject the Infiltrator from the building, and return him to your own HQ so that you can build the new technology.

It is important also that the unit selected for the infiltrator to morph into does not die otherwise you will "unmorph". Get in and out quickly with the infiltrator. There is a time limit before the internal security finds you and you are forced out of the building.

To steal the plans, once the specified building has been entered, click on the BUILD list to see units that that particular building can produce. Pick the unit plans that you want to steal.

Quick tips:
•By building a bridge, you can access the north end of the island holding the hover facility with skirmish tanks. This allows you to attack the building without hover technology.
•At the start of the game take a Construction Rig and Sniper across the river to the top right corner of the map where there is a water spring. You can build your Water Launchpad north of the water spring (yes, it does fit inside the forest), or shoot away some trees with the Sniper to fit it in closer (select Sniper, then type "A", then with attack cursor, click on the tree you want the Sniper to take out).

MISSION 7. SUBTERFUGE
OBJECTIVES:
•PROTECT THE CIVILIAN CITY FOR 30 MINUTES, AFTER WHICH THE TREATY WILL BE SIGNED DESTROY THE ENEMY HQ WHICH HOUSES THE STOLEN PLANS.

At the very beginning of the mission, a group of Mercs/Raiders will attack your starting forces. Send 3 Construction Rigs to the north edge of the civilian town immediately and build 3 Heavy Rail Platforms to stop the attack.

To stem the first attack on the town, send all the infantry you start with up to the top of the civilian town to hold off the attack until your Heavy Rail Platforms (or turrets) are finished building. Compliment the HRP's by placing adjacent laser turrets.

Continue by walling off the northern end of town with alternating HRP's and laser turrets to weather the 30 minutes demanded by the mission objectives.

In this mission, don't make too many units, instead, ensure that your defensive line has enough turrets to repel any enemy attacks on its own. Alternatively, keep building Skirmish Tanks and Mercenaries and sending them to the north edge of the civilian town to backup your turrets/platforms.

Water will be almost immediately targeted in this mission, so use HRP/laser turret combinations to protect your water supply from any imp incursion.

There is a spring in the NE corner of the

map guarded only by a camera tower. Send two Construction Rigs and a few Skirmish Tanks there. Destroy the camera tower and then build a Water Launchpad near the spring. Build a Laser Turret to protect your freighters path.

Quick tips:
•After holding off the imps for 30 mins, you need only take out the HQ in the enemy base to win. You don't HAVE to hold off the enemy for 30 minutes. If you can destroy every enemy building and unit in less than 30 minutes it is a successful mission. There is a lightly defended base to the NW. This is not the HQ you are to destroy in order to complete the mission. It's a decoy.

•There are only 3 Water Springs. One just a short distance from your starting base to the NE. Another (unguarded) Water Spring is in the top right corner of the map. The third is guarded by the enemy inside their base.

•Use Hover Transports to collect water, wheeled freighters are very slow on the marshy ground and have to detour around all of the puddles.

Note: The enemy base uses HRP's (Heavy Rail Platforms) to defend itself. In order to get past them to the HQ, massed mercenaries work best against these long range turrets as any armour you send will be chewed up almost instantly.

MISSION 8. THE DESICCATOR
DESTROY THE IMPERIUM BASE
PREVENT ANY EVACUATION OF THE
DESSICATOR FROM THE AREA

Note: The Dessicator transport will go directly to the Southwest corner of the map.

The best way to destroy the dessicator is to transport 5 morphed scouts somewhere along the right edge of the map near the horizontal position of the facility. You should be able to see where the transport is (just south). Then use 2 or more phase transports and simultaneously surround the transport with Tank Hunters and Rail Hover Tanks. Be sure to select and target the transport as the units tend to attack stuff at random when first emerging.

To avoid camera towers being immediately destroyed, use morphed saboteurs instead. Place them in the Phase Runner and take

them to the right. Hold CONTROL to unload one at a time. Make sure to set their INDEPENDENCE to LOW so they won't move.

Once the transport has been located, morph 5 Snipers and send them off in the Phase Runner. Unload them in firing range of the transport. They'll each get at least one shot, maybe two enough to destroy the transport.

With the transport gone, destroy the plasma turret and other defenses to the south of the Imperium base, sneak in a R.A.T. with some Construction Rigs on board and a few Triple Rail tanks following. As long as the defenses have been destroyed, you won't be attacked by the artillery. The computer may respond by sending some scouts, kill them quickly!

Build an Assembly Plant and Repair Facility with 3 Rail Turrets on the north side. When the Dessicator convoy decides to head south, the turrets will take it out.

Destroy the water tower to the east for a Water Spring and continue further east for another. Even further east is the backdoor to the Imperium base.

Quick tips:
•To prevent SCARAB assaults on your base, have a lot of air cover. Build at least 3 heavy rail guns on the coast to the east of your base. Back them up with Skirmish Tanks to hold off enemy infantry waves. Set damage tolerance to low so they will seek out repairs.

•Try to control the area just south of the enemy base in the northeast corner ... that is where the Dessicator transport will come from.

•Enemy artillery will rain on you if you try to

come up from the south towards their base in the northeast corner. Take about 15 Triple Rail Tanks up the coastline and kill off their artillery. First phase run groups of morphed scouts into various places in the Imperium base to get a view of what's there.

Alternative tactic: Phase run 5 martyrs to the Dessicator transport. Unload them next to the transport and with a maniacal laugh, it's gone. When the phase runner gets back to your base fill it up with 5 more martyrs. Phase run them over to the Imperium base and pop em out directly in the middle of the groups of SCARABs.

Scratch one set of artillery support.

Using martyrs to blow up the Tachyon tanks and other mobile ground units it makes it clear to phase run in an advance group of Triple rail tanks at the upper right most corner of the map. They will proceed to destroy the power generators there making room for the next phase run wave of construction rigs. Build an assembly plant, repair station, HQ, heavy rail platform and laser turret in the corner. The rest is easy.

MISSION 9. THE CURE
OBJECTIVES:
•PENETRATE THE IMPERIUM DEFENSES AND CAPTURE KAROCH
•DESTROY THE GENETIC RESEARCH FACILITY
•MOVE KAROCH TO THE OFF-WORLD TRANSPORT PLATFORM

Start the mission by taking a scout to the north of the mountain ring until she has LOS on the northern barricade. Use artillery to take the barricade out. The scout can then enter the compound and retrieve "Mr. Green" (you might want to use artillery and spotting to take out all enemies inside the ring first).

Reading through this guide will help you to understand just how magnificent a game DR is

With the area clear, utilise the two Water Springs near your location. One is to the north of Karoch while the other is west of Karoch. Karoch is right in the center of the map where you can see it. You need these two Water Springs to survive. There are LOTS of SCARAB hidden around the map and powerful turrets guarding the Water Springs, so use the given units to destroy them. Once your credits are coming in, build Snipers to take out the infantry. Triple Rail Hover Tanks will handle the armour.

Enemy strategy: In this mission the AI will use flying scouts to get LOS for the SCARAB. To counter this, you can either build a solid Air Defense or sniff out the SCARABs as suggested above.

Quick tips:
•Type 'A' to get an Attack Cursor then click on the place you want to Attack. Use Shift+A for Attack without moving!
•Stand next to the neutral person to "take control" of him.
•A Phase Runner or two can be very helpful in capturing Karoch.
•The main enemy base is in the southeast quadrant of the map. There is very little opposition from the Imperium there.

MISSION 10. SIEGE OF INDRA

•PROTECT ALL HQS TO ASSURE THE SECURITY OF THE SYNOD COMMANDERS
•CREATE AN AERIAL ASSAULT FORCE AND ELIMINATE ALL IMPERIUM REARMING DECKS WITHIN THE HOUR.

Start the mission by building a Heavy Rail Platform back from the pass and a laser turret on either side. (This is where the majority of the attack will happen). Be sure to also build a few other laser turrets and air defense sites around other areas of the base.

With a good defence set up at the start, your base should be able to survive what the computer throws at you at. Don't worry if you haven't even made any units yet, that's normal, this is a tough one. Make sure you keep repairing the buildings though.

When you start to get a bit of breathing space, build Outriders and take small groups out to pick off the S.C.A.R.A.B.S. This should be done as soon as possible to reduce the damage the AI does on attacks.

Continue to keep building Outriders (and a few Sky Bikes for their protection) until you have enough of a force to go for his base.

MISSION 11. LAST STAND

•RELOCATE YOUR BASE TO A SAFER LOCATION
•PROTECT COMMANDER RADEC
•REGROUP AND DESTROY ALL IMPERIUM FORCES

Start the mission by relocating your base to the northeast corner around the talon deposit. Make two water launchpads and send 2 Freighters to the water spring to the west of your base.

This mission introduces the dreaded rift generator, an area affect weapon. In order to protect your defences build your Heavy Rail Platforms away from other structures. (The rift generator is located is in the southwest corner of the map).

Next start to clear away trees from your base (attack them using the "A" key attack cursor) and build an advanced phasing facility. Load multiple phase tanks and phase them inside the Imperium base (as close to the Rift Generator as you can get). Repeat until you have a decent amount of phase tanks on-site. Unphase them all and attack the Rift Generator and/or Power Plants.

Build Shockwaves and save them for troop attacks, they can destroy entire regents. Make 6 scouts and morph them at various spots on the map and build a laser turret

near but not too close to the north water spring. One of these will take the first Rift attack. Rebuild it after it is destroyed, the computer seems to rift the closest building everytime.

Now build a Reaming Deck and Repair Facility then create Outriders and set their orders all to LOW and click HARASS! This keeps the Imperium ground units from building up. The computer will start building Air Defense units in retaliation, but this still greatly reduces ground assault forces.

Unscrupulous tactic # 2: A fun way to kill both rift generators is to phase run morphed scouts next to each rift generator ASAP. Then unmorph them at the same time. The buildings should rift each other apart.
Bug Tactic #1: The computer AI appears not to rebuild a Headquarters if it's only HQ is destroyed.

MISSION 12. DEATH BLOW
OBJECTIVES :
DESTROY ALL IMPERIUM STRUCTURES

This is a tough one, so here are a series of suggestions to try.

Load morphed scouts into a phase runner and pepper the map with them (when ready to unload a scout, select the phase runner and Ctrl-click to release 1 scout at a time).

Expect to be rifted at your outer perimeter. Keep construction rigs in backup to rebuild.

As you uncover the landscape via your scout peppering, you'll find a few choke points the Imperials send units through. Begin a saturation artillery attack on those points (but not too close to nearby scouts). You can make artillery continue to fire on that point using the A key.

Concentrate primarily on defense until you have LOS to the majority of the map.

Multiplayer Strategies

Imparting this knowledge is indeed painful as many an Internet player has fallen to it. Still, there are a lot of Americans on the Dark Reign server to beat. Dish 'em one up for Australia.

The best way to start Multiplayer is to go for as much water as possible, this applies to both sides whether Imperium or FG. Build an HQ, Power plant and a Water launchpad.

With the freighter received from the power plant, click him, the select paths and tell him to scout. He has good armour to withstand the blows and will reveal the map very quickly and penetrate further into enemy bases then the light armoured scouts will. Continue on to build a training facility, Factory and upgrade as quickly as possible. As the game progresses try to have as much water as possible and other factories/training facilities.

Freedom Guard

Phasing, Morphing, Phasing Morphing. I'll say it again Phasing and Morphing (oh, and skirmish tanks). This is the FG's strong point and many a victim will fall to it.

Get those scouts out early. Morphed scouts are a ton of fun and remember, you don't need to send them off as that tree. As the scout unmorphed is quite small, try and move her to the destination then morph. Don't build scouts on a desert map.

The trick to Freedom Guard incursions is phasing. Make 20 troops at a time and make them into a tactical group. Move them to areas you want to defend and phase them around turrets.

When the enemy comes to attack, your troops will unphase and wipe them out. Often the other players sends only enough units to take out turrets and isn't ready for the slaughter.

Finally, phase units all around the enemy base as close as possible. Aim for about 100 phased all around, grouped in 5 different groups. Start the attack with combinations of skirmish tanks and triple rail tanks. Set up a Shockwave to attack from one side whilst armour attacks from another. In the confusion Unmorph ALL the troops into his base telling them to move to the back with high independence so they will engage everything. This tactic is a hoot as the victim tries desperately to defend a virtually instantaneous

assault because of how close phasing puts you to your enemy.

Imperium

Rift, Rift, Rift. Imperium suck up water a lot faster then freedom guard so take as much of it as possible. Your main force should almost only consist of tachyon and plasma tanks favouring the tachyon. You should have at least 3 or 4 factories to ensure enough production for serious damage.

Attack combinations should consist primarily of tachyon/plasma formations with about 5 anti-armour annihilators and 2 shredders to cut down troops. Try and have the first tanks built straight away to fend of quick incursions.

Use the Imperium's phase technology to send 3 tachyon tanks behind the enemy base where defences are often low. To counter the phased strikes, don't forget the power of air. Ground troops can't defend against air assaults and there are no phasable anti air units. Keep plenty of air craft around to attack any phased regiments in your area. Also have scarabs ready towards the back of your base to immediately fire on surfacing troops.

With a strong invasion force ready (About 10 tachyons, 10 plasma + 20 bions) have your rifts assigned as a tactical group. Use a recon droid to zoom up on his base and establish the defenses. Rift the defences ensuring all your troops are out of the way and then mop up with the invasion force.

Combined play

Dark Reign is one of the first games where 4 players over the internet was both feasible and possible. Forget the Togran option, the best 4 player tactic is to have one of each side. Someone take FG, the other Imperium.

Use your standard single player tactics to stay alive and prepare for this most deadly of tactic. We call it the phase rift and it has sent a lot of would be opponents packing. When your partner has a rift ready, load up a phase runner with some expendable units. (It is preferable to get the imperium player to transfer you 5 tachyons as they last longest. Make sure to transfer back funds to him). When you're ready, send the phase transport to the middle of the enemy base.

Unleash the tachyon tanks on everything and whilst the visual window is up, get the Imperium player to rift the base. A devastating tactic that mixes both the elements of surprise and the use of a super-weapon. Whilst the rift does it's damage. have those phased troops around the base spring up and assist the assault.

Ultimately, FG should play to have as many troops phased around the base as possible, concentrating on tactical positioning leave assaults up to the Imperium player as those units are better designed for it. Produce as many shockwaves as possible and give them to the Imperium player for sneak attacks. Use Imperium armour to lure defences to one side of the base whilst you unphase masses of troops on the other.

To be continued in issue 21...

DOWNLOAD HELL

99% copied... Connection to server was lost

It has happened to all of us at one time or another, whether it be due to your ISP packing it in for some unknown reason, or someone picking up the phone at an inopportune time. While mildly annoying if you're just having a bit of a surf in your spare time, it can be downright infuriating if you've downloaded 95% of the latest game demo which you've just got to have. Until recently, there has been nothing you could do. Sure you could swear, you could break bits of crockery but there was nothing, nothing that could bring that precious .zip back. Thankfully times are changing and there is a utility which you simply have to get if you're ever going to make another download ever again.

GetRight,
(http://www.headlightsw.com/getright.html) is a program that will change your view on downloads. GetRight's basic function is that if you are disconnected from the net for any reason, it will retain whatever you have downloaded ready to resume at whatever point you left off. You can be disconnected for hours, you can turn your computer off, take the plug out, anything! Next time you

go to download that file GetRight will start exactly where it left off, saving hours of frustration. That isn't all though, if you have loads of net time and want to download a huge file overnight, usually what happens is that you'd wake up in the morning to find you got cut off with about 1.1MB copied. Not with GetRight, if you get cut off GetRight will redial your ISP and continue until the job is finished, it will even turn your PC off when it's done, how user friendly is that?

I can personally vouch that GetRight saves what sanity we have left. While I was downloading Team Fortress it got to 98% before my ISP decided it didn't want to send information to me any more, all I did was redial and GetRight finished off the last 2% in about a minute, without it there's no telling what I would have broke.

GetRight is so easy to use it just isn't funny. All you have to do is tell GetRight where to look and away it goes, it has a nice little icon on the taskbar and everything you could possibly need is at your fingertips. Say you were downloading 20meg and were about halfway through when a severe electrical storm struck. As we all know, it's not the best idea to use the phone when there's lightning flashing around everywhere, so all you do is press the pause button and do it later. If you really get stuck, there is a comprehensive help system which will explain everything.

It's on the CD!

Great news eh? Now that you're all pumped-up about this must-have thing - you've got it already! Just check under Utilities on this month's cover CD.
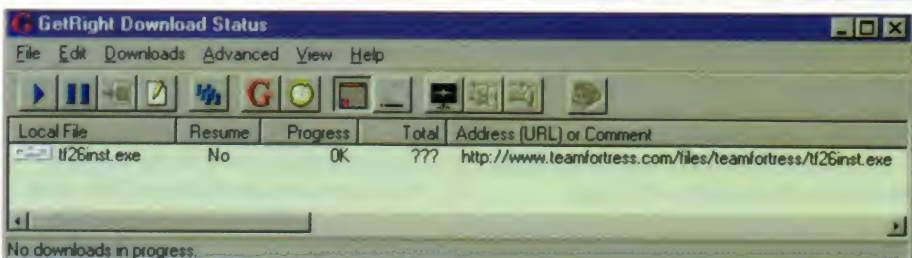
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NSA/MUL043

ONLINE ACTION. WHERE THE BEST FREE, FUN STUFF IS TO FOUND. WE LURK, YOU GET THE PERKS.

The games situation is all gearing up for a big new year. Quake 2 seems to be the buzzword at the moment, with around 1 million downloads already having taken place at the time of writing. In fact Download.com which deals in downloads of all types of applications reported that from their site alone there has been 200 000 downloads of q2test, around five times that of Microsoft's Internet Explorer 4, definitely a coup for gaming and the underdog in general. (Incidentally, in those millions of hours I have as spare time I figured out that even being fined $US 1 million per day Bill Gates wouldn't go broke for well over one hundred years). Jedi Knight is gaining a good following on the net and a lot of new patches are coming out to change all sorts of things, so we could see JK Rally before we know it. Total Annihilation is also proving to be a worthy play with new units being available from Cavedog's website, and of course Ultima Online is chugging away nicely. There are a lot of hot games coming soon but this month the focus is on something a little bit different but incredibly playable.

Acrophobia: http://www.bezerk.com/acro

Acrophobia is made by the same people as the hilariously funny "You Don't Know Jack". Basically it's a game which involves you figuring out Acronyms. For those who are struggling to come to grips with the English language, an Acronym is an abbreviation using the first letter of each word. For example, WWW is an acronym for World Wide Web. The idea is that you and a bunch of mates from all over the world play against each other in real time to see who can make the best acronym. The computer pops up four or five letters on the screen and you have to make a pseudo sentence to match, after sixty seconds everyone's acronym gets put on the screen and you have to vote for the best one. You can't vote for your own and you don't know who said what. At the end of the vot-

ing the player with the most votes gets points according to how many words were involved, the player who answered first also gets a few points. This continues until a player reaches thirty points, when this happens that player and the person who is coming second at the time go into the Face Off round. All this really means is that they make the acronyms and the rest of the players vote, the winner of the game is the one who wins the Face off round. There aren't any prizes, except that you have the satisfaction of knowing you can put five meaningless words together on the spot - which makes something which might be recognised as a sentence by someone who has drunk far too much.

It sounds simple and it is, its dead easy to get into but a right royal pain to master. It also has this fantastic "game show" feel which is incredibly atmospheric, all the time the clock is ticking and the pressure is on. It even has ads (somehow a good thing) and there is a chat box too, so you can get to know lots of strange people that are playing in the US at 3: 30 in the morning. Above all, the best thing about Acrophobia is that it's different. Sure, we're all expert Space Marines and masters of destruction that can cut a swathe through hordes of cut throat enemies, but how good are we at actually thinking? Brains as opposed to a bloodied knife. Another great feature is that it doesn't have the latest 3D engine, does not use MMX and has no need for Direct 3D. If your PC can run the net you can play Acrophobia and be a part of one of the most fun and original games in ages. Head on over to Bezerk's web site and check it out.

Rod Campbell

Face-Off Round 1
BUR
being under rated
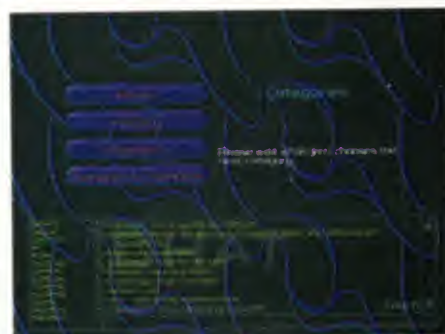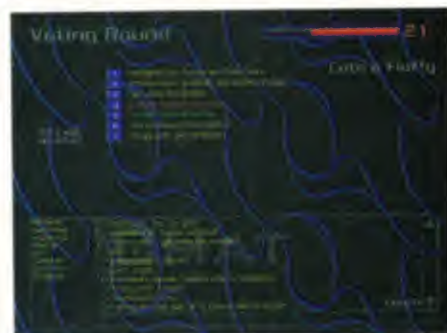
Brilliantly addictive - but the adult language rooms aren't for prudes

WHEN YOU PLAY IT ON THE NET

Happy New-Year intrepid gamers...
Did we all have a good Christmas then?
Good. Plenty of new Adventure games to
get through and you're stuck already?
Think nothing of it that's what the Oracle
is for!

Space Quest IV

? I have just started playing Space Quest IV and am stuck. I have a laptop, a coin and a piece of rope. Currently, wherever I try to go, a robot shoots me. Also, if I wait too long, a man comes along, screams and then I get shot dead again.
Please help, a little bunny always seems to come and play music. Could this be a clue?
Dean Fortomaris
Sydenham, Vic.

✳ Well Dean, that bunny sure sounds foreboding. In the introduction Roger is about to get captured and then is rescued and sent forward in time.
You pick up the story with Roger standing in the middle of a street in a rather demolished-looking future Xenon. This initial area is a 3x3 grid, you start off in the middle at the bottom. Avoid the cyborg like a plague.
Make your way to the right and pick up the rope that is near the bottom of the screen to the right. Then make your way back left to the screen you started on and left again, where you will see a wrecked hovercar. Look inside it and open the glovebox. Take out the PocketPal laptop. Close the glove-box again if you have a sense of neatness, otherwise don't worry about it. Make your way up the screen to the middle left screen. Look in the hole in the tank and take the unstable ordinance. Use your better judgement and put it back.
Make your way up again, into the upper left corner. Hide behind the bank's pillars and lay the rope out on the ground. Wait for the cute little pink bunny to come hopping along. When it hops into your noose, pull on the rope. Take the power cell out of the bunny and put it into the laptop.
Next make your way across to the upper right area, hide under the overhanging roof and wait for a while. After quite a while a robot will come, it won't be able to see you and will leave.
Then make your way down to the middle right screen. Open the topmost grating and hop in. Take the bottle into custody and press the button that's under the blotter on the table. Listen to the message, then open the sewer hatch and

enter the sewer. The easiest way to the other side is just up a bit, then left all the way to the other side then down to the ladder. Some green slime will come out of a grating and follow you. Scoop some of the slime up in the bottle and then leave and climb up the ladder before the slime decides to scoop you up.

Fade to Black

? I need your help desperately. I'm stuck on level 5 (Pyramid) of Fade to Black. I've spent weeks trying to work it out, but to no avail. My questions are, Where and how do I pay homage to the statues of the Ancients? Also, whom and where is the Oracle on level 5?
Tyson Van Prooyen
Parafield Gardens, S.A.

✳ The Pyramid level Tyson, is the largest and hardest level of the game and I can't give you the full solution or other readers will miss out. I'll tell you how to get to the statues, from there, you're back on your own.
Check everything twice and you won't get into any "I-forgot-to-take-that-thing-and-now-I'll-have-to-return-all-the-way-and-lose-energy"-kind of problems. :)
From the room you landed in run to the door on your right. Nevermind the shooting turret - there are 3 blue forcefields on this bridge that restore your energy to the full, use them carefully. In the next hall search the *far* locker, the one near the wall with a red and blue stones in it. Approach this locker from the furthest side, or you'll wake up one of the Golems (green stone guys) that stand in this hall - they are slow but invulnerable to shots. With the key you found in the locker return to the starting room (recharge with the blue force if you need). Use right teleporter.
In this room search both lockers, nevermind the floor switch, but do *not* touch the button on the wall! Be sure to take the gem from the second locker, they are important. Walk out the door, run ahead from the shots, open next door, here are 2 rechargers. Behind next door kill 4 guards and enter the basin room. Open the door and in the blue room search both lockers. As you approach the second one (with a switch) turret will start to shoot, push wall button to stop it. Again, make sure you took a colored gem. Exit to basin room, push wall button.
Now the floor switches in the corridor are active - step on one of them accu-

rately and the red forcefield will appear. Go back to the starting point of the corridor to the basin room - there are two wooden statues in there (maybe not wooden, but they sure look like :)). Push first the right, then the left.

The Dig

? In The Dig, I have reached a point where I can't go any further. It's early on in the game on the alien planet. I have found a bracelet, tusk (bone), jawbone, wire, 2 engraved rods (purple and light brown), device, a blue crystal (light power), a metal plate and a shovel. Brink is dead, and Maggie has left me, what do I do in the cave with all the doors and panels with buttons.
Jason Notaro

✳ At the Nexus are you? A common blockage point for many people. Here's the solution for that section. Maggie and Boston climb down to Brink. Brink is dead. Maggie decides they should explore separately and leaves.
Pick up the shovel. Pick up the plate. Noting the sealed doors, panels, dark tunnel and ramp, go left until you find a purple engraved rod. Take it and look at it and make a note of the symbols.
Continue left back to Brink's body. Look at the alcove and place the plate on the bottom. Go down the ramp and access the panel. You have to pick up the unattached lens and place it in its proper position. To do this, enter the following sequence: yellow, yellow, purple, purple, purple, purple, orange (take lens), blue, blue, blue, blue, blue, blue, orange (drop lens).
Power Up Procedure Program.
When you have the proper sequence displayed, push the triangular button. This turns the power on. Remove the loose plate and take the blue crystal.
Go the panel immediately to the left of the dark tunnel and enter the combination of the purple engraved rod on the panel. This should open the door. Go through the door to the Museum spire.

Zork Grand Inquisitor: coming soon to an Oracle near you...

DISCWORLD 2

? For months I have been stuck in act 2 of Discworld 2. Please help! I need to get the ants off the basket full of food and into HEX (the machine) to get the answer.
Andrew Nisbet
Auckland, New Zealand

* This will take you to the end of Act 2 Andrew, here's what you need to do. Go to XXXX land. Go to the right, and use the picnic basket on the anthill. Go back to the beach. Use the saw on the ironing board. Use the ironing board on the surf. Use the camera on the cave paintings. Go to the elven circle.
Put the camera in your inventory, not the Luggage's. Use the glue on the hooter. Use the hooter on the horse costume. Use the Librarian on the costume. Put the costume in Rincewind's inventory. Enter the circle. Use the costume on Rincewind. Use the camera on the Elven Queen. Go to Unseen University, and enter the High Energy Facility. Use the ant filled basket on Hex. Use the wire bits on the pyramid plan. Use the honey on Hex.
Use the Pyramid on Hex. Talk to Skagg, and pick the universe icon. Go to the hermit, and give him the answer. Go to Dibbler, at Hollywood, and give him the band, jingle, novelty, and babe. Go the make up room, and give the elven queen pictures to the make up girl. Talk to Dibbler again. Go to the shades, and use the dead certificate on the door at the far left of the shades, up the steps. Talk to the sheep, using the stunt icon. Give the sheep the cave painting photos. Get the reel, use it on the device. Use the elven queen film on the device.

NEVERHOOD

? Please help me as I have been stuck on this puzzle in the Neverhood for months. I am in a room with purple and white walls, in the left corner here is a glass chamber with 5 crystals and one red button used for activating it. When you turn the lights off and activate it, there colour changes based on the rotation of the crystals. What is the solution?
Adrian Tomizzi
Swan View, W.A.

* Start singing the rainbow song with me. "I can sing a rainbow" :) :)
When the lights are on you will see the name Bobby on the outside of the Machine. Turn the lights off and go back inside the Machine. The letters in the name correspond to the colors in the spectrum of visible light that you learned about back in high school.
For those of you that skipped school that day it went something like this: ROYGBV. R stands for red O stands for orange and so forth. Make the crystals in the Machine

the same colors as the letters in Bobby. When you come back out again you should be little.

ZORK NEMESIS

? I am in need of urgent help in Zork Nemesis. I am trying to get into the air element. I have found the tower in which the element is located, but I can't solve the puzzle. Please Help me.
Jamie
Figtree, NSW

* To solve the realm of air, follow this. What do I do with the horns? Each of the horns makes the sound of an elemental force. Blue is wind, purple is thunder, yellow is an earthquake, green is rain, and red is fire. Also the blue horn is in a different key than the others. The point of all this is simply to tell you that blue is the color you should be striving for in the constellation puzzle in this same room. What do I do with the constellations? The idea is to have all the blue stars on and none of the purple stars on. The easiest way to do this is simply to click any purple star which is on and any blue star which is off. If you keep doing this eventually you'll get it right and you can watch an FMV sequence.
Why can't I move the levers? You need to close the curtains first. When you are facing the levers, move to the right of the platform and search for a hotspot just under the sphere. If you click it, curtains will come down. This unfreezes all the levers except one, which is permanently stuck. How should I adjust the levers? Lever 2 should be half on. Levers 3 and 4 should both be full on. Lever 5 should be off.

DREAM WEB

? In Dream Web, how do you open the junction box at the boathouse and how are you supposed to get into the church?
Trystan Naylor
Darwin, NT

* Trystan, I won't give away the ending to you, so I'll take you only so far. Here's what you need to do.
Go to Chapel's house. Use the wall to climb over it and look around - you find a blue network cartridge with info on the church. Exit back over the wall. Go back to your apartment, put in the new cartridge and logon as Beckett.
The password is SEPTIMUS.
LIST CARTRIDGE
READ BRIEF
EXIT
Go to the Underwood's boathouse. Pick up the railing below the steps. Examine the pipe in the water and use it

with the bottle. Walk right and you will find yourself by the boathouse. Don't use the balcony or the security system will be activated and will kill you. Examine the metal plate in the top left of this location. Use metal plate - Ryan brushes the sand off to reveal an electrical junction box.
Use metal plate with railing - Ryan opens the junction box. Use the junction box with the bottle and the security system will be destroyed. You can now use the hole in the balcony to climb up. Use the hole in the window to enter the boathouse. Shoot Underwood after you have talked to her. Dream number 4 takes place here.
Talk to the keeper, exit down twice and use the last door on the left. Use the plinth with the key. You wake up further along the beach.
St. Septimus Church: The Preacher and The Dealer.
Go to the church. Use the wire cutters on the right side of the gate. Enter the church. Pick up the hand Walk down until you come to the altar. Pick up and drop the cloth and 2 candlesticks from the altar. Examine the hole in the alter, use hand with hole. Examine the altar and use it. Examine the hole in the floor and use it. Use the tomb - Ryan pulls back the lid to reveal two crystals, a dagger and a rock. Take the crystals and the rock. In the jar by the tomb lid is another crystal. Take it. Place the crystals in the stone design on the floor. The exit will open up. Go to the right and up. At the top of the corridor is a statue - use this. The statue is a combination lock. To open it, click on the 10:00 position three times and the 8:00 position twice to make the displayed symbol look like the symbol in the 'Diary of a Madman': Press the crystal at the 12:00 position. A gate will open in another area. Explore the area, picking up all the rocks you find. There are 8 of them. Put the rocks in the trolley near the end of the hallway. Use the trolley - Ryan gives it a big push and it flies off the screen. The screen shakes - there is a crash, and rocks bounce back along the corridor.
The door is now open, walk down, left and down, and you will find the priest. The priest has already changed from human form into something else, you find his remains. Exit through a hole, which leads to the subway. Go left and up until you come to a hole in the left wall. Save your game! Time critical section ahead.

Zork Grand Inquisitor

RELENTLESS 2 – TWINSEN'S ODYSSEY

? Please help! I'm stuck in Twinsen's Odyssey. I have 3 of the 4 fragments and found the Francos Burgermaster notes on how to find the francos fragment but I still can't find it.
I've read the Burgermaster's notes 1000 times and still don't get it. What do I do?
DAVID PERRY
CANTERBURY VICTORIA

* Ok David, the trick is, once you get to the Francos village, it's time to remember some things from your previous visit. Everyone is looking for the fragment. The only one who KNEW where it was has been eaten by a monster. People think he left a clue in his cabinet. Unfortunately, the owl stole the key. So we have to get the owl. Remember the dog? The dog said that the owl used that little hole next to the house as a home, so maybe it's in there. Let's go check it out. Look in the niche next to the Burgermaster's house, to the right of it. In there is the key. Go back to his house and open the locked cabinet. The note will help you find out where to dig to get the fragment. If you can't understand it, then try this. It says put your back to the tree, and face the bazaar. (Not the 3 dome one, the bazaar where you bought the pickaxe) Be in Sporty mode (he said sportive) and go about 5-7 steps, until you're on the grass. Turn around and use your pickaxe. Look around that area.. You will be standing on a small patch of grass facing the tree and a rock in front of you that looks like normal ground. On to the Ceps fragment, the last one. Go to emperors mansion on top of the hill, and kill the guards with your sword. One of them has a key which you can use to get inside. Inside is what could have been a pain of a maze, but they decided to put the fragment in a very easy spot. Upon entering, get the key in the chest and go into the door on the top right of your screen. Keep going in that direction until you can't anymore. Then go to the top left, and go until you see the three little people in front of a double door. Get the key, go in there, and fight your way to the statue. The statue will

come alive, revealing a very ugly, but even easier boss. Go into aggressive mode, and use ALT with your sword and just keep thumping him until he dies.
You should now have all 4 fragments and therefore the full key, along with the last level of magic. On to the Dark Monk's temple, on the one and only Celebration Island. Scale the mountain and enter the temple in the middle. Place the key in the center then step outside. Here I will leave you - FUNFROCK'S BACK!!!

DISCWORLD

? In Discworld at the end I have looked at everything except I cannot complete act 4. I have got the key from Lady Rampkin and got mambo the dragon and used a lit fire-cracker with him, but the dragon will not show up, please help me.
RHYS DONOVAN
BRACKEN RIDGE, QLD.

* You're so close Rhys, here's how you solve it. First get the key from the tied-up Lady Ramkin and visit her estate. There unlock the dragon-cage and go in it. When you step in that molten pile, don't let Rincewind turn around... just click a few times forward and he will go through. Take the little Mambo with you back to the market square. There (really there, it won't work elsewhere) put a lit firecracker in the throat. When you now leave the square and come back, the showdown starts. Because our firing is not successful, throw the tart with the love custard at the dragon.

HAND OF FATE

? I am currently playing Hand of Fate and I am stuck on the second island. I have given the ghost a body and been to the cellar but I don't know how to get past the guards. I also don't know how to use the cheese machine. Please help!
SCOTT BALLARD
PELAW MAIN, NSW

* Ok Scott, here's from the beginning of the island to get you a ways. At the Meadow: Get letter, look in haystack (find empty flask). Go S: Outside Farmhouse. Take water bowl (ignore dragon's weeping for now); take bottle of vinegar. Give envelope to farmer, talk to him and hear him recite recipe for mustard.
Go W: Waterwheel. Remove stick jamming wheels in top left corner of screen.

Machinery is now in motion. Open valve. Go E and E again: Garden. Use mastodon's trunk to water garden. Plants sprout. Take lettuce and radishes.
Go W and W again. Put radish in mill and scoop out mashed radish with bowl. Click vinegar on crushed radish, getting mustard. Dump mustard in cauldron (part of sandwich spell).
Go E Go N: Meadow. Take sheaf of wheat. Return to water wheel; crush wheat, scoop it up in bowl and dump it into the cauldron. Put lettuce in cauldron (more of the sandwich spell). Return to Meadow: a ghost emerges from the haystack. Catch it in the empty flask; now go to Garden and use ghost on scarecrow. It becomes animated and takes off. Return to meadow: Use flask on sheep, getting milk. Go S to farmhouse. The animated scarecrow turns up and the farmer chases him away, leaving opening to cellar unguarded.
Enter cellar. Inside cellar: Pour milk in funnel of cheese-making machine, then press lever. Get cheese (dump it in cauldron). Examine horseshoes: one (perhaps two) give(s) you "a funny feeling"; this is your lucky amulet. Take another horseshoe. There are shears on the shelf with the horseshoes — they can be used to get wool from the sheep in the meadow, but aren't necessary. Sandwich potion is now ready. To activate, fill flask and click on Zanthia. (Sandwich is used to get guards to open gate).
Exit cellar. Go W: Waterwheel. Put _not_lucky_ horseshoe in electric spark. It turns into a magnet. (Save if you want to fiddle around with the spark again).
Go E: Farmhouse. Replace bowl and remove it, making dragon cry. Collect tears in empty flask. Go N Go E: Outside city gate. Click sandwich on guards. Gate left unattended. Go E: Inside city gate. Flush cauldron. Get stick from seahorse's mouth. Go N: Alley. If entrance to Drunk Dragon Inn doesn't open, click the disks to the left of the door in the same sequence as the one seen earlier at the Firefly Tree. Enter Inn. Drunk Dragon Inn: Take mug, fill it with rootbeer; take taffy from barrel. Must recite poem in order to leave. Exit. Outside, back in the alley, the octopus challenges you to bet for gold. Re-enter inn, click on left-hand brawlers several times. One of them loses a gold tooth. Click wand on gold tooth, turning it to lead. Pick up lead tooth. Exit. Click wand on lead tooth, turning it to gold.
Alley: Before betting against octopus, drop _lucky_ horseshoe (the one that isn't a magnet). This lets you win bets. Collect three gold teeth. Retrieve horseshoe. Return to waterwheel: drop teeth into press - get gold coins. Return to city. Clerk in shack is zonked (so are a couple of other characters encountered later). Cure for this is "skeptic spell". Go E: Street. Get parchment (more spells), flask, orange peel. Put orange peel in bowl, click beer on bowl — get sweet-and-sour sauce (can also be made using other combinations such as taffy and vinegar).

Turok

CAPITALISM PLUS

Type:

$$$***$$$

To give you $100,000,000 and all the new products so you don't even need a R&D center.

F22 LIGHTNING 2

Hold down

ctrl+Alt+shift+home for invulnerability
ctrl+alt+shift+Ins for full reload and refuel in air

IMPERIALISM

Ctrl click on the globe then type "**Pippin**". Choose the red country and you will get all resources. (but you have to mine first)

TWINSEN'S ODYSSEY

Press Esc to bring up the menu and type:

LIFE = Full Life
MAGIC = Full Magic
FULL = Full Life, Magic and Clovers
GOLD = 50 coins
SPEED = Frame Rate
CLOVER = Clover
BOX = Clover Box
PINGOUIN = Meca-Penguin

NEED FOR SPEED 2 SE

tombstone = Bonus car
bomber = Bonus car
rushhour = Unknown effect.
slip = Slowmotion
fzr2000 = SUPER bonus car
pioneer = Pioneer mode, very FAST
hollywood = Secret track

Turok

+100 ||| 100

PREMIER MANAGER 97

If you need some cash, renew the contract's of your player's and make the club fee as much as you want to and then put them on the transfer list!

The second option is if you are in the premier league you then buy player's from the third or second division and sell them after rising the club fee!!!

RACEMANIA

Buy a badmobil or fatso.
Make sure you become 1st the 1st race, then buy a pea.
Sell your badmobil or fatso and then you should have more money then earlier. Like this you can buy lot's of expensive cars, because you can sell the other one for (usually) a lot of money.

SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

Use the name '**R Testers ROCK**' to play any level. Use the name '**Credits**' to watch the end sequence. Select Hoth to play.

STAR FLEET ACADEMY

To reload photons in mission 7 type ****TIBERIUS** after the first battle go to transporter range of starbase and hit "i".
In Omega 12-300 type **$PUNISH** to get extra photon power.
To kill Romulan near Raven in END GAME, type **MERCURY.**
To kill Sherak in Smugglers Den, type **$->ME!**
For extra battles and extra systems, in Common Ground, warp to Thaxius from Tasocles. In Balance of Terror, type **KNAT**

ATTACK in the Starbase system.

STREET ROD

Buy the car on the front page for $475 (1949 Chevrolet), take out its engine and transmission and you can now sell it for about $40,000

UPRISING

In game, type "**slick**" - for super powerful lasers and missles. Remember to hit "c" after entering the codes to put all energy to weapons.

WARGODS

To use these codes, type them in the box marked cheat code under the advanced tab under the properties menu.

On	Off	Description
1971	1791	Player 1 invincibility
1515	5151	Player 2 invincibility
0708	8070	Player 1 does more damage
3366	6633	Player 2 does more damage
3871	1783	Player 1 can play as Grox
9021	1209	Player 2 can play as Exor
1037	7301	Press HP-LK to do fatality moves
2509	9052	Brings up free play in options menu
4774	7447	Ends game after defeating one opponent
9997	9996	Can play on a secret arena
5721	5721	Displays frame rate

TUROK

D D D N S T B R = Invincibility
N D N L P = SPIRIT Mode
T H M S C L S = All Weapons
L N J H N S N = Unlimited Ammo
R B C H N = Big Heads
G N N T R T M N T = Full Map
J S N C R P N T R = Tiny Enemy
C R L S F N D N G S = Purdy Colors
M T T S T B B N G T N B = Level 1 Warp
D R R N S T B B N G T N = Level 2 Warp
M K J N K = Level 3 Warp
P T N D N C N = Level 4 Warp
N N T N D = Level 5 Warp
T R M N N = Level 6 Warp
J M D N N = Level 7 Warp
M R G R T T R R = Level 8 Warp
S H N T R R N T = Gallery
T H T R T M B B = Show Credits
J F F S P N G D N B R G = Infinite Lives
D N L D D C K = Quack Mode
N G L C K C K = All Keys
J H N T H M S = Longhunter Warp
S T P H N B R M L = Mantis Warp
G R G M L C H C K = Trex Warp
R N T R C = Campaigner Warp
B K S T R D = Fly Mode
F H G T B C = Show Enemies
J H N N C K = Disco Mode

Want more?

Here's some:

Direct from the whitecoats in the PC PowerPlay labs to you. Our boffins have been toiling away in secret to bring you 2 very special additions to your growing list of gaming essentials.

The PC PowerPlay Game Guide '97

Never before in the history of gaming has so much been given to so many. You want help with a particular game? Chances are it's here.

• Cover CD *PACKED* with cool addons, walkthroughs, FAQs, Solutions, maps, patches and trainers, all easily accessible with our special menu.

• Cheat codes
• Tips & Tactics
• Strategy Guides
• Complete help with the hardest games!

And our pride and joy:

The PC PowerPlay Hot Hardware Guide

• Biggest VIDEO CARD test ever!
• 3D accelerator MEGATEST
• Complete joystick test
• New-tech sound cards
• Full modem test
• BIG Monitors and LOUD Speakers
• HUGE 10 page beginners guide to gaming PCs.
• The PERFECT games PC

Take our word for it, if you're serious about games you NEED these PC PowerPlay Special Editions. Go harass your newsagent *NOW!*

Letter of the month! Win a subscription!

Each month we'll choose a letter that we think is THE BEST that month. Not the funniest (although we reserve the right to hand out a freebie if a letter makes us laugh HARD), but the most intelligent, the most incisive, the most informed.
The winner gets a
FREE 6 MONTH SUBSCRIPTION!
Existing subscribers get 6 months added to their term. How good is that!

Australian motor racing games

I have recently purchased a game called Australian Touring Car Champions, because I like racing games, and I'm a fanatical supporter of Australian Motor Racing. I cannot believe what a poor product this game is. No matter what I do, I can't get it to run properly. What we really need is a PC (or Playstation) game that has the Australian Touring Car Championships, with all tracks including the Sandown 500 and Bathurst.

Surely one of the bigger gaming houses such as Microprose could use an existing game engine (like GP2) and make suitable changes to suit. (Touring Cars obviously handle differently to F1 cars.) They are missing out on a wave of popularity here & in Europe of public interest in Touring Car Racing.

I realise they may say that Australia is only a small market, but if they use an existing game engine, they could change the games to suit the market in which they are sold. In Australia, they could have V8 Supercars and 2 Litre Supertourers, and in Europe they could have British Supertourers, in Germany, their supertourers etc.

You only have to look at the 2 recent Bathurst 1000 races held in October this year. The 2 Litre cars are building popularity, and the V8s had the largest crowd ever at the Mountain. If these games were endorsed by the popular drivers such as Brock, Johnson, Bowe, Lowndes, Murphy, Perkins, Morris, Brabham etc, this would greatly enhance sales. TV ratings for all these races have been increasing all the time.

I can see no reason why a game (a SERIOUS GAME) of the Australia Touring Cars V8s,would sell at least as many copies as GP2 or F1. Please someone seriously consider developing these games. I'm sure the various controlling bodies would welcome the opportunity to collaborate on a project such as this. Let's not settle for this abysmal first attempt, and let's really get a great Australian Racing Game.

Jason Priddle

Say it again brother. We know it. The distributors for the Bathurst game you mentioned never sent us a copy, perhaps they were concerned about what rating we'd give it... We've seen it though, and it's a shocker, a slap in the face for both gamers and motor racing fans alike. Great news! While it's not the Aussie flavour, TOCA Touring Cars (reviewed this issue) is a hell of a nice racing sim and bloody close to the feel of a Bathurst sim.

Big Tools

How is it the PC PowerPlay gets its info and pictures on upcoming games even before the info gets on the web? And how come you can get cheats and solutions to games when they haven't even come out yet?

What sort of computers does PCPP have at the office, I am guessing that they would have to be pretty good as you'll have to test try all the new games and hardware.

The Tagells

We get all the early stuff because the publishers want us to say great things about their new games so you'll all rush off and spend spend spend!

Our main games PC is upgraded frequently, but today it's a Pentium 2 266, Apocalypse 5D video card, Cardex Dragon 3Dfx, 6.5 gig hard drive and a Sony 20 inch monitor. It's nice... We also use an old P133 and a P200MMX for benchtesting work. For the actual writing-type work stuff Next Publishing have kindly provided us with a Mac network. Toys for a play-job!

Hands off our games!

I am utterly speechless at the methods that New Zealand are using to classify games!?! What right does the NZ government have to deny the rights of our fellow gamers over there? Well, I say that right they nay possess and they should adopt a system like Australia's.

Here I get onto Australia.

Duke Nukem was denied classification when it was released for the first time, until it was toned down. Yet the Atomic Edition I purchased is classified by the OFLC MA15+, but it is uncensored. In your 18th issue you responded to the letter 'R18+++' stating that the guidelines are being adhered to and "There are years' worth of precedents". This kind of makes me wonder why when the media seem to turn away a little the regs appear to be 'laxed'. Perhaps because Johnny Howard isn't in the limelite? Quite strange, considering the fact DN3D Atomic Ed. contains a little bit of lesbianism even.

Overall though I believe that our fears are short lived on the censorship issue. Yes, I know that Postal is toned down, but it should have been banned anyway judging by your review. A lot of games should be...

As a final say, I must sing praise for 3Dfx Interactive. Besides having a great accelerator, they have got some brilliant customer support people. I must congratulate them. I also liked the G-Police demo, thoroughly enjoyed it, thankyou very much!

Cheers to you fellas and Rafter is a legend!

Rodney Pearce

Games made me the cynical bastard I am today

I've been playing computer games for quite a while and have used many different game platforms. To be honest, I find the world in and around computer games to be almost as enjoyable as the games themselves. Here is some of what I mean.

Upgrading - I've read most of the literature you guys put out about 3d cards and I have learnt

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We miss the old days!

I wish me back to a time not so long ago; a time when Windows were things in walls; a time when there were only two screen resolutions on my MicroBee - HiRes and LoRes. Looking through a few 5 & 1/4 disks for a friend who barely uses his 3 & 1/2 drive and doesn't even _have_ a 5 &1/4 took me back to the good old days of my youth - of which I'm still in... theoretically. As a 17 year old who remembers the 8088 and the release of GWBasic, it scares me to think of all these new 'computer users' who have never had to edit config.sys by hand; who have no idea about optimising autoexec to glean those magical extra few k of the precious 640; who think that Windows 95 is a well made product and who think the internet was only invented four years ago.

Why oh why can't they leave us people in peace? Before user friendliness was necessary we would happily spend hours in front of our large machines, eking out the last drops of power, hotting up those 80286's and extending the capabilities of the EGA card with low end code shuffling. In those days, people saw us as computer nerds - and so what - at least they left us in peace to do our nerdy thing. A shareware author could release a product and not get hounded by useless flamers who couldn't be bothered working out just what the problem was and fixing it themselves. When something went wrong we could fix it ourselves, and if we couldn't, we could log on to the internet and use simple, effective Unix commands to find and communicate with people who could. Using a computer in those days was an art form, a dedication to the machine, a relationship with the hardware itself. You could tell back then what was wrong with the computer by the way it sounded. You could tell the difference between a bad sector on your floppy and a coffee spill on the disk. When thumping with just the right force and in just the right place would do something to a hung machine. Nowadays, if it's not fast enough, they just buy more RAM or download the latest bug-ridden version. There's no love or respect for the machine any more - it's just use, use, use, abuse.

I remember a time when I ALWAYS had three or four meg free on my 20 meg hard drive - because programs were well written, and care was taken at all times to what was filling that precious hard drive real estate.

Those were happy days. Those were simple days.

Chris Edmonds (Khrob)

I thing, "woe to thee who thinks they will never ever need to upgrade their games machine again". Daunted by the cost of such enhancement cards I thought "hmmm" for the money spent on "X" graphics card or "Y" soundcard I could buy a Sony Playstation for that plus 1 or 2 games. By chance my mate just bought a Sony Playstation but was unhappy because his brand new game couldn't be played with his standard digital controller. An analogue one was needed. I thought I had heard it all, redundant Playstation controllers!!!. Back to square 1.

Games off the shelf - If you buy a new but faulty clock, what do you do? Take it back of course! What do we do with new games?? Grin and bear it.

Here is my ritual I perform just before I buy a new game:

1) I RECITE that whatever game I'm getting, it will be overpriced. Why? The game companies have to factor in the rule that; NO FEMALES WILL BE SEEN DEAD buying a PC computer game. Well the majority anyway.

2) I PRAY like hell at the time of purchase I can afford the net 'cause I wouldn't want to miss the patches, BUG FIXES, cheat codes or chat groups I consider as essential requirements.

3) I CHANT the PC Power Play score (great mag.), play the shareware again for the last time. The shareware will always play better than the full version.

4) I CAST spells to remind myself I do buy games for graphics and gameplay and not 'cause of factors such as Laura Croft's shorts.

Anyway bye and thanks for the good CD Roms.

Steve Fryc

Online manuals: a gamer's grief

I am writing about the online manual debate. In my mind there is no good reason for a game producer to skimp out and put in online manuals instead of those nice, big paper manuals that we all love so much. Some may say they are doing this to save money. While the game producers may believe they are saving money doing this, they are actually losing more than they are saving. Why? Because having an online manual instead of those big chunky paper manuals is like giving pirates the game and saying "Mate, can you please crack this and sell it to everyone for 10 bucks".

Buying a pirate game without an online manual (especially flight sims) is not really a viable option and the pirates aren't going to be bothered about photocopying or scanning the manuals. They are still going to pirate the games, and some people will buy them, but most people who were considering buying the game from the pirates would stop and think, and then go out and buy it from their local computer store. And to all those "greenies" who might complain about paper manuals taking up too many trees, shut up! All the game producers have to do is use recycled paper. I will happily contribute all my British and American computer magazines to help get rid of online manuals.

Russell Phillips

Online manuals: a developer's dilemma

Just a few words from a developer on the discussion about getting a decent manual in a software box. I think you will find most developers are avid game players hence there field of choice. As such I defend us, we are all for manuals the thicker the heavier the better. We are all for background information, Weapon charts, keyboard overlays etc. What you will find is that the marketing/publishing people who generally are not game enthusiasts only think in terms of dollars. Simple maths for them "sell 20,000 units without a manual and save $3.50 a piece then we get an extra 70,000 dollars".

From our recent experience where a manual was requested for our rally game which was to include rallying history background information even a detailed how to drive section, we were basically told that it was not going to happen and that a sleeve insert of x number of pages was what we where going to have and to make the manual fit.

If anybody is to blame for the "Death of the Manual", it goes to the money men and women.

Stephen Handbury
Silver Lightning Software

Freak File:
Mat Brady

Age: 25
Profession: Art Director for Zoonimedia Animation Design.
Likes: Hackey-Sack, Capoeira, Hangliding, Combi-vans and my huge rainbow coloured umbrella.
Dislikes: Dishonesty, all current systems of politics, law and education, paper-cuts and first-date nerves.
Fav Sport: Sumo wrestling.
Fav Food: While gaming- pistachio nuts, otherwise Nut Feast on soy.
Fav Drink: Tropical fruit juice.
Fav TV: The Simpsons
Fav Music: Happy Mondays(now Black Grape), Pop Will Eat Itself (now Bentley Rhythm Ace), Massive Attack, early TISM, Trip Hop, Trance Techno and Triple J.
Heroes/idols: Eric Chahi, Jackie Chan, William Wallace.
3 Fav Games of All-time: Another World, Tekken 2, Quake.
Fav Multiplayer Game: You Don't Know Jack XL.
Online/ICQ nickname: Matski
Longest Time Spent on What Game: 7 hrs on Tie Fighter (which I won from Hyper #10) and over 10 hrs on the Shoot-Em-Up-Construction Kit (C64).
*Computer History:* 9 yrs- C64, Amiga and a continuously upgraded PC.
Current System Specs: P133, 64 Meg RAM, 2 Gig HD, Diamond Stealth Vid Card, Orchid Righteous 3Dfx, AWE 32 Sound Card, 33.6 Modem, Win 95, Full Tower, Tatung 22" monitor (old), MS Natural Keyboard, Sidewinder 3D Pro Joystick, A3 Graphics Tablet (old), Colour Scanner (work's), 600dpi printer-scanner-copier-in-one.

Other Freaky Facts:
I'd like to say right from the outset that I didn't choose to be Freak of the Month. PC PowerPlay chose me. Admittedly, I have probably been one of their more dedicated readers for both PCPP and Hyper, having won quite a few competitions, letters, etc. in both mags and also being with them right from the very start. I just love 'em.
I am an Animation Designer for Columbia/Tri-Star in Los Angeles and I work out of the Brisbane home office (which I also live in by myself) called Zoonimedia.
Basically, what I do is design the characters (with the help of three other artists that come in) for up and coming animated television series. Right now I am working on the GODZILLA animated series, based on the new movie coming out shortly. My other colleagues in the States are working on the MIB animated series which looks great. One day I would like to design and script my own computer game (which I have already started working on two of). I have (probably too many) other projects that I work on which include: an entertainment system (that I won the Sony Brainstorm Competition with); a political party and a "picture book" board game.
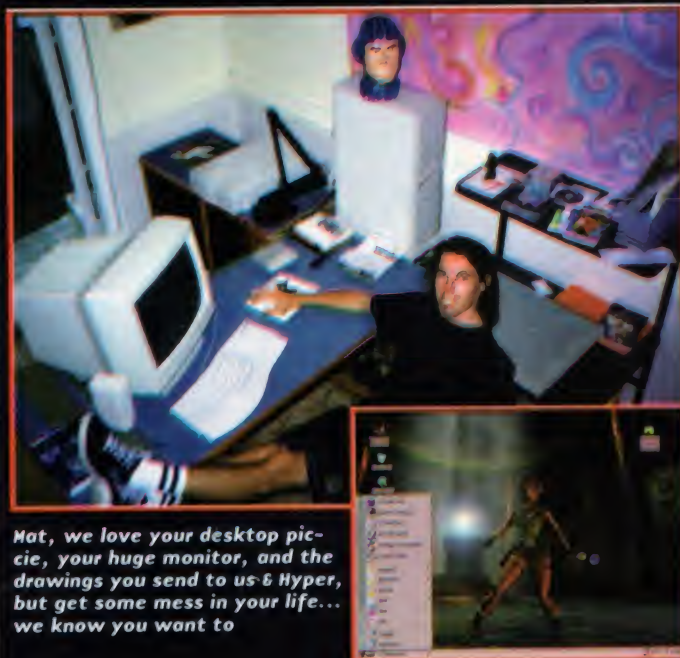
Mat, we love your desktop piccie, your huge monitor, and the drawings you send to us & Hyper, but get some mess in your life... we know you want to
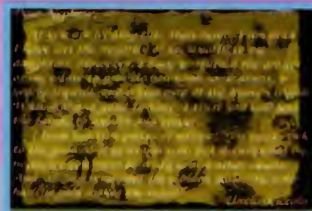
Machiavelli, The Merchant Prince

Microprose

Political powerplays, slanderous lies and deft backstabbing — these are the ingredients for tense conflict, bloodied war and loud bellows of joy. In Machiavelli The Merchant Prince, you get to do all these things as part of your rise to power. If you don't do them, you simply won't win. What better way to test the eternal bonds of friendship with those pals of yours who sit close to your bosom? Yep! Play Machiavelli and watch those bonds dissolve.

Bad is good

Machiavelli has to be one of the few games where points are scored for how well you screw your opponents. Well, that's not entirely true — you need to act honourably to achieve a high score — but in order to obtain positions of power and rank, and in order to make a tidy profit through trading, you're going to have to pay off nobles, hire lowlife's to publicly slander other players (and, if successful, blame another player for the heinous act) and do your best to out-deal your pals in trades and trade routes. Better still, if you manage to fork over enough raw cash to buy yourself a position of power,

you can then use it to your selfish advantage.

For example, if you make it to Popedom you can 'excommunicate' cities because, well, you feel like it. Excommunication causes the people there to panic and the cost of goods drops dramatically while the amount they're willing to pay for goods rises (most traders ain't going to trade with a dammed city). So, how to make a tidy profit from your own

traders? Excommunicate a city on their route! How's that for abuse of power?

Even better, aspire to become the general for Venice and you get a free army under your command. Go invade a friendly city that you and your pals trade with and then it's yours — you get to say who can trade there and who cannot. So you politely prevent your friends from doing busi-

ness there, making you one hell of a popular guy but an increasingly richer one at that.

But dammit! All this naughty behaviour is being noticed by the annoying, useless peasants of the land and your popularity is dropping (which means you'll eventually be ousted from power). No problem! Buy the people a famous artwork, donate to the church or buy yourself an impressive villa to show that only

nice guys make lots o' dosh. Very soon you become a popular chappy again.

The game is finely balanced so that, obviously, only one player can be in any one position of high power at a time and only after much wealth-gaining, backstabbing and plotting. What normally happens, then, is that you make pacts with your friends to vote eachother into different positions of office, promising to return favours once power has been gained. Thus, players normally end up holding a different position each which can make double dealing and backstabbing a painful affair.

What if your so-called best pal, holding the ministerial position, suddenly abuses his power and fires one of your expensively bribed nobles? This tips the balance of power against you. Not a prob! Just go down to the local tavern and hire an assassin to kill one of his nobles, and see if you can blame it on someone else too! Trading routes doing well? Buy off a large number of priests and next time the Pope dies (which can be arranged, if necessary) lo and behold you'll have the majority vote!

Some thinking required

Beneath all the well-crafted powerplays in Machiavelli there's a complex trading and exploration engine that sees you buying commodities around Europe and setting up trade routes in order to gain dosh.

Being relatively old, Machiavelli is a multiplayer game but only one player at a time, making network games slow and tiresome. Email play is an option and with a configurable, random map generator it's very easy to setup new games if the default map isn't your scene.

Machiavelli is definitely a game to be played among friends. Get a hold of it if you can and test those enduring bonds... in the end, to win the game, you'll need to tread on everyone's toes.

Ashton Mills